[Information regarding the Paramount chief is filed under 643, that on territorial chiefs under 622, and that on village headmen under 624.]

## MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE BABEMBA TRIBES

The tribe in question is that of the Babemba. The Babemba 101
have their own history, thus it is an important tribe. They claim to h 175
have come originally from the Lunda kingdom. It is well known that the Lunda, situated on the upper reaches of the Kasaï River, a tributary of the Congo, is one of the biggest and most powerful negro kingdoms of Africa. The Balunda established their rule over all the neighboring tribes, thus founding three big colonies which go by the name of Baluba. The first of these colonies was established at the source of the Zambezi River, partly in Portuguese Angola, partly in British Northern Rhodesia. This first colony was later conquered by the Matabeles who had originally come from Zululand. It took the name of Barotseland. The second Baluba colony was established further east between the Kasaï and Sankuru rivers, while the third of the Baluba colonies settled on the banks of the Lualaba, another tributary of the Congo. The Babemba (Baluba) came from this last colony.

Their migration took place about 200 years ago. The story 167
of this migration is one of the most impressive in history. The 175
exodus lasted for nearly ten years— the tribe first crossed the Luapula, Chambezi and Luangwa rivers; but then they turned back and again crossed the Chambezi River further north, and finally settled on the banks of the Karungu River, nine kilometers (five and a half miles) north of the present-day missionary settlement of Malole. There they came upon a related tribe by the name of Babemba. The Baluba [728]
superseded them entirely by appropriating their territory and bringing them into subjection. The two races soon merged. The Baluba ceased to be Baluba and were henceforth called Babemba. [101]

Since their exodus from Baluba, the Babemba have had about 175
thirty kings, each with his history—and a glorious history at that. [643]
The most illustrious page in their history describes their wars with the invading hordes of the Baangonis of Zulu origin. While all the neighboring tribes yielded and paid tribute to the Baangoni, the Babemba gloriously withstood the terrible assaults of the formidable enemy. The war lasted for ten years (from 1860 to [210] 1870). Finally, in the course of a decisive battle the Babemba won complete victory. Sungadiaba, the great Mungoni chieftain, died from grief over this defeat. His army was completely disorganized, and the

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for this people owing to the poverty of the soil and the prohibitive cost of transport either to Abercorn, at the base of Lake Tanganyika, or to Broken Hill, the nearest station on the railway line.[1] For the same reasons white settlement practically does not exist, except in the region round Abercorn. Thus wage-earning possibilities are scanty for the natives of this area,[2] and to pay their Government tax, now 7*s.* 6*d.* a year, and to purchase the European goods to which they have become accustomed, large numbers of the adult men of the tribe—from 40 to 60 per cent.—are obliged to leave the territory annually to look for work, mostly in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia, but also in the Katanga mines, Southern Rhodesia, and even South Africa. It is rare to find a man who has never left his country to work abroad, and the majority migrate to and fro between the mines and the villages and only finally settle in their home districts in their old age. Thus in this respect many of the food problems of the Bemba are typical of those that exist in all such manless areas in Africa, whether in Rhodesia, Nyasaland, or the Protectorates. That is to say, we shall have to describe an agricultural system in which most of the old incentives to work have disappeared, the male labour force is nearly halved, and the system of economic co-operation broken down.

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*Social Structure.*

It is impossible to describe in detail the tribal structure of the Bemba, either as a preface to this special study, or from a comparative point of view. There are, however, certain main principles of their social organization which are absolutely fundamental to an understanding of all their organized activities and forms of co-operation, and give the direction to their interests. Of these the dominant institution of the Bemba is their highly complex political system and the particularly autocratic character of the chieftainship on which it is based. Allegiance to a common Paramount—the Citimukulu—is the main tie uniting the members of a tribe that is scattered very thinly over a wide area. It determines their local grouping, and is the basis of the traditional pride of this warrior people and its distinction from neighbouring tribes.

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643.

[1] 3½*d.* per lb. from Kasama to the rail-head at Broken Hill.

[2] It was estimated in the Kasama district in 1934 that about 30 per cent. of the adult males could have earned their tax locally. (Provincial Commissioner's Report.)

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105 643 On a man's relationship to his chief depends his residence, his use of land, the economic group he works with, the way in which his food is distributed, the religious and magic beliefs that sustain him in his work, and his social ambitions. Thus without understanding the political organization of the Bemba it is impossible to describe their system of food production.

105 622 643 Briefly, then, this political system consists of a Paramount chief, the Citimukulu, a hereditary ruler with a fixed title, drawn from the royal clan—the *Benaŋandu* or 'Crocodile' people—who traces his descent in the matrilineal line for more than twenty-five holders of the office. The Citimukulu rules over his own district, the centre of the Bemba country—Lubemba—but also acts as overlord to a number of territorial chiefs, who govern districts similar in size, succeed to fixed titles, and are drawn from the same clan, and in fact the same lineage group, as the Paramount himself.[1] Each of these territorial chiefs has one or two sub-chiefs under him, these again being drawn from the royal clan, but in some cases from more distant branches of the family which have become localized in one particular area.[2] Sisters and maternal nieces of the chiefs are reckoned as chieftainesses, *Banamfumu*. They succeed to titles, and rule over villages, while the chief's mother, the Candamukulu, has a small territory of her own, and plays an important part in tribal councils. Beneath the chiefs [627] come the heads of villages (*mwine mushi*, plur. *bene mushi*) appointed by them. A particular feature of this political system is [644] the hierarchy of the 40–50 officials, *Bakabilo*, many of them also of royal descent, who succeed to fixed titles, and perform ritual duties at the court, take charge of the chief's complex mortuary and accession ceremonies, and act as a council for the whole tribe.[3] Besides these hereditary priests and councillors attached to the Paramount's court, though not resident at it, each chief and sub-chief has his own councillors (*bafilolo*), with legal and executive functions, living at his court and appointed by him, and in the

[1] The most important of such territorial chiefs are the Mwamba, Nkolemfumu, and Nkula, and at the moment the first two are own brothers to the Citimukulu, and the last a first cousin.

[2] e.g. Mwaba is a sub-chief of Nkula, but this title has become associated with another branch of the Crocodile clan.

[3] Autocratic chieftainships, associated with hierarchies of hereditary court officials, are found among the contiguous tribes in the Congo, e.g. Luba (Verhulpen, op. cit., pp. 55, 186), Shongo (Torday, *Causeries congolaises*, 1925, p. 55), Kongo (J. H. Weeks, op. cit., p. 37).

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old days had captains of his army, executioners, and other court dignitaries as well. The complexity of this political organization form an interesting contrast to the simplicity of the people's economic system. Such a centralized form of government is not found among the surrounding tribes.

The power of the chief rests ultimately on his people's belief in his supernatural powers over the prosperity of the land and the welfare of his individual subjects. By his inheritance of the guardian spirits (*umupashi*, plur. *impashi*) of the line of dead chiefs, and his possession of the sacred relics (*bubeuye*) of the tribe, he has power of approach to the tribal deities and he is responsible for the economic rites on which the food-production of these people is thought to depend.

Besides their supernatural powers the chiefs formerly based their apparently unchallenged authority on the physical force they could exert. They controlled and armed their warriors, and had power of life or death over their subjects, whom they could kill, enslave, or sell, and in the case of women, bestow in marriage. Their legal system gave them the right to mutilate those who offended them, and it put them in supreme charge of the poison (*mwafi*) ordeal. The land theoretically belonged to them, and they exacted tribute in labour and kind from those who cultivated it, and maintained monopolies over ivory and salt. No Bemba could reach a high social status or obtain economic privileges unless related to the royal family or a personal favourite with them. Thus it is impossible to study land tenure, leadership in economic enterprises, incentives to agricultural labour, the distribution of land and goods, or exchange, without bearing the political system of this tribe in mind. Linton has recently used the word 'Orientation' to describe for comparative purposes the chief focus of the interests and social institutions of any particular people under review. In this sense military ambition under an autocratic chieftainship is the orientation of the Bemba tribe.[1]

It is obvious that chiefs of this type who relied on the use of military force, tribute labour, and slavery for their supremacy, but did not accumulate material possessions or possess any valuable economic resources in their territory, are in a particularly poor position at the present day. The Bemba chief receives a small subsidy from the Government—£60 a year in the case of the

[1] *Cf.* R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936.

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105 643 622

Paramount chief and less for the territorial chiefs—and therefore earns annually about the same amount as a clerk. Rich African rulers such as the Nigerian emirs, the Barotse king, or some of the South-African potentates, do not exist in this area, and hence one of the important practical problems to discuss is the effect of this poverty of the Bemba chiefs on an economic system which is as closely linked with the political organization as is theirs.

*White Contact.*

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Permanent contact between Bemba and Europeans dates from 1890, when the White Fathers built a station at Kayambi on their north-eastern border and entered the country two years later. The British South Africa Co. established a post at Abercorn in 1893 and at Mirongo, near the present Government station at Chinsali, in 1896. These stations were built to put an end to slave raids in this area, but two years later (1898) the Administration intervened in a disputed succession to an important chieftainship and established themselves at Kasama, now the Provincial head-quarters, in the centre of the Bemba country, while the White Fathers, who entered the district more or less simultaneously, built their big station at Chilubula, twelve miles off, now the chief centre of the Diocese. There are at present Government stations at Kasama, Chinsali, Mpika (the site of a large aerodrome), Mporokoso, and Luwingu—to mention only those in the Bemba country proper. Most of these stations consist of a couple of houses built for the Government officials, an office, and a store, but Kasama is a bigger centre and has a white population of 54. Catholic influence is predominant in the heart of the Bemba country and the White Fathers have now built over ten stations in the tribal territory, mostly distributed in key situations near the villages of big chiefs. They also have a teachers' training school at Rosa to the north-east of Kasama. The Church of Scotland Mission has a big teachers' training-school at Lubwa to the south-east of the district, and stations near the borders of the Bemba country at Mwenzo and Chitambo. The London Missionary Society also has seven mission centres in or near Bemba territory including Senga, Mporokoso and Mbereshi. There is one Government School at Kasama. There is only one big European plantation, Shiwa Dandu, to the south-west of

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273 733 is regarded with a kind of laughing tolerance or envy and, as will be seen, the tribal drinking customs make it impossible for any one except a chief to become a regular drunkard. A commoner may brew beer more often than his fellows, or feel its effect quicker, but it is difficult for him actually to get much more to drink than they do. In any case, the drunkard is regarded generally as an irresponsible individual, and of anybody who commits adultery or assault when under the influence of drink, the phrase 'an affair of beer' (*umulandu wa bwalwa*) is used quite tolerantly.

273 Some of the deleterious effects of alcohol are recognized. I never heard any complaints or jokes about double vision made, but have several times seen natives refuse to go out tree-cutting the morning after a beer-drink because of 'beer before the eyes' (*ubwalwa pa menso*), meaning, I think, fear of giddiness or lack of co-ordination. Headaches are quite common the day after a big beer party. To the European, the remarkable thing about native drinking is the speed with which the people seem to get excited and garrulous. The percentage of alcohol is probably rarely more than 4 per cent., and many of the company get very little to drink during an evening. But it must be remembered that the *ubwalwa* is drunk hot which may increase its potency, and also that it is drunk very much less regularly than in this country. The Paramount Chief 643 273 told me that a great ruler should drink beer every day without exception. Otherwise, if he drank only once or twice a week, he would become drunk like a commoner and stagger about and give bad judgements in court. 'His chieftainship would suffer' (*ukuti bufumu buonaule*). This was obviously in the nature of a 'rationalization', but it is true that chiefs who drink regularly seem to get bemused, but never violently drunk as commoners occasionally do.

273 574 [521] But it is probably the fact that beer-drinking is such a social event that accounts for the people's quick sense of exhilaration and even intoxication. Natives gather together from surrounding villages to drink at their relatives' huts and exchange gossip, and this is in itself an interesting occasion in a society in which the local group is so small. Further, beer is drunk by the maximum number of people who can crowd into one hut. At an average brewing three or four calabashes might be available for distribution, and of these one would be given to the headman to share with the elders of the village, another might be given to the son-in-law of the brewer to drink with the younger men of the village, and a

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finally, after some weeks' work, brew beer, and invite men to a *kutumya* party so that they may get some necessary granary or house built.

*Distribution at the Chief's Court.*

The most considerable exchange of food for labour is that which takes place at the capital, whether in payment of tribute workers (*ba mulasa*), courtiers, executive officials, or visiting councillors on tribal business. This whole system of distribution illustrates clearly not only the political and economic ideas of the Bemba but the rules of hospitality already described. Each man or woman who works for the chief[1] should be given food. The men are provided with porridge and relish cooked by the chief's wives, and the women unthreshed millet to prepare for themselves. The workers eat together in one group. The boys and young men who act as personal servants to the chief are also fed separately with cooked food, being mostly unmarried men. Older courtiers, heads of sections of the village (*bafilolo*), or messengers (*bakapasso*) are treated in more honourable fashion. They are sent a share of meat sent in as tribute, or invited to share a pot of beer on the veranda of the chief's hut. At Citimukulu's court, tribal councillors (*bakabilo*), if present in twos or threes, are treated in the same way, but if the whole council is present on matters of state, they will probably stay for a week or ten days, and then they are regularly fed by the chief's wives. In this case the whole council—some forty strong—is divided into groups (*nsaka*) based on descent and historical association.[2] Each of these groups must be provided with a separate basket of porridge and a dish of relish, and sits eating back to back in the chief's enclosure. Honoured visitors, such as members of the royal family, are sent flour, chickens, or beer by the chief and cooked food by his head wife (*umukolo*).

The organization of these supplies is naturally a complicated business. At Citimukulu's court during nine months (April 1933 to January 1934) 561 men and 324 women came to do *umulasa* labour and were fed at least one day of their service. The *bakabilo* to the number of about forty met at least twice during the year, while it is impossible to estimate the number of other persons engaged on a big chief's business. The distribution is of such

[1] Cf. Chapter XIII. About three days a year at the present time.
[2] The *nsaka* of Katongo, of Citikafula, of Cikutwe, and of Citimukulu.

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437 643 644 651 importance politically that it is supervised personally by the *mfumu* himself, who watches meat cut up in front of him and gives the orders for grain to be given out. A special steward is in charge of his big personal granary and hands out baskets of grain each morning to the senior wives in charge of the feeding of the *umulasa* labourers, or the brewing of beer for any special purposes. The wives themselves have their own small personal granaries and cook dishes for the chief which he divides as he pleases,[1] or make presents of beer as they choose. All the three or four senior wives distribute hospitality to honoured guests in their own rights, and the *umukolo*, in particular, is required to be very punctilious in sending dishes of honour to travelling notables.

All the *bamukolo* I met were women of a good deal of organizing ability, capable of supervising the younger wives, arranging for the endless grinding and brewing required in the capital,[2] and the stirring of the huge pots of porridge to be served in enormous eating-baskets about eight times the size of an ordinary *icipe*. Any one who sits in the inside of an *umukolo's* hut during the late afternoon will know at once by the bustle, the concentrated faces, and the ring of waiting food-baskets that important and responsible work is on hand.

The whole of this system of distributing food is of course necessary to the chief if he is to make gardens and conduct tribal business through his councillors. But it is more than this. The giving of food, as in most African tribes, is an absolutely essential attribute of chieftainship, just as it is of authority in the village or household, and the successful organization of supplies at the capital seems to be associated in the Bemba mind with the security and well-being of the whole tribe itself. This fact may be said to 344 786 be symbolized by the institution of the sacred kitchen (*kamitembo*) at the courts of the big chiefs (Citimukulu, Mwamba, and Nkula). From the outside the *kamitembo* looks like an ordinary hut, although specially well built. It is one of the sacred houses built by the *bakabilo* with special rites at the founding of a chief's new village. In fact it is the first to be built on the site. At Citimukulu's founding ceremony a special hereditary official, the Mwana Bwalya,

[1] The cooking of the chief's own food is usually done by the *umukolo* herself, or by some old woman specially appointed to the task, since the taboos protecting his fire from sex impurity are very strict.

[2] Chiefs' wives do not have to pile branches in the fields, but do very heavy grinding-work for beer-making and feeding the workers.

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crosses the Kalungu river near the capital at dead of night and has ritual intercourse with a woman given him for the purpose on the spot selected for the building of the *kamitembo*. Thus he 'warms the bush' (*ukukafye mpanga*) and leaves immediately afterwards secretly for his own village. On the place where his sleeping mat lay, one of the *bakabilo*, Cishika, the hereditary lighter of the chief's fire, must immediately make new fire by friction. This is the chief's sacred fire. The same patch of grass serves as site for the *kamitembo* house built a day or so after by all the *bakabilo* in concert after prayers by the Citimukulu and the burial of flour, salt, meat, and fish in the foundations. Once built the sacred hearth must be installed (*ukuteka ishiko*) and this is done as the climax of the long ceremonial founding of the village,[1] by killing a female sheep, and cooking it in the hut on the sacred fire with salt made from river grasses. This use of the traditional salt of the tribe is said to ensure that the land may be savoured (*calo calowe*). Two big baskets are then cooked on the same hearth and carried to the chief, who tastes the porridge and meat and then hands it to all his *bakabilo* to eat. This is the way in which the 'spirits are put into the hut" (*ukubika mipashi mu panda*), so that the life of the new village may begin.

After this the chief's fire burns perpetually in the *kamitembo* as also in two other sacred houses in the village and it remains under the special charge of the *umukolo*.[2] No person of sexual vigour may enter for fear of polluting the fire, and the chief's messages are carried there by small boys. Within the hut were piled in the old days the carrying poles on which tribute of beer and meat had been slung—signs of the chief's greatness —and the elephant tusks brought him. This is no longer done, but the beer required for big sacrifices to the land spirits is brewed in the *kamitembo*, and the chief and his head wife sleep here during this period, keeping sex taboos all the while. This is described as 'waiting for the yeast of the land' (*ukulindilo musunga ue calo*). Animals killed for sacrifices are also killed here, and the new crops cooked before being offered for the first-fruits are

[1] The ceremony of founding the last new village for the Citimukulu took from May to September 1933. I witnessed the first part of the ceremony but not the installation of the sacred hearth.

[2] The *umukolo* should only have ritual intercourse with the chief on ceremonial occasions and therefore as a person sexually pure remains a fit guardian of the tribal fire.

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cooked on the same sacred hearth. It is in fact the sacred kitchen and storehouse of the tribe.

The whole institution of the *Aamitembo* illustrates to my mind that close association between authority and the power to distribute provisions on which the tribal organization depends. The chief owns the food and receives tribute, and the chief provides for his subjects and distributes cooked food to them. Both these attributes are symbolized in the *Aamitembo* house.

We started to discuss the use of food as a payment for labour as part of a study of domestic economics, but we have been inevitably led to consider the deep-rooted political and religious beliefs connected with this form of distribution. They are beliefs that are very much alive to-day and insensibly affect all attitudes between ruler and ruled whether white or black. The European generally gives his native employee food as well as money wages. He does so usually for the purely practical reason that he is afraid that otherwise his servants will starve and spend their money on clothes. But to the native the white man's provision of food puts him in a special relationship which is quite different from an ordinary business transaction. He becomes 'his man' in a special sort of way.

*Tribal Distribution and the Individual Ration.*

We have described the distribution of cooked food among the Bemba, and some of the social and economic uses to which foodstuffs are put. It remains to indicate the effect of these different cultural regulations on the daily intake of the individual members of the tribe. Briefly speaking, these are two in number. A fairly even distribution of supplies is produced in any one village on any particular day, but a great irregularity in the individual amounts eaten as from day to day or month to month.

The causes of these changes in the daily intake can be readily deduced from the foregoing chapters. The first is the varying numbers of helpers who join to form each elder woman's cooking team, giving to some ample labour for the lengthy processes of grinding and cooking, while others belong to so small a family group that they are unable to prepare a proper meal at the busy times of the year.[1]

[1] A point to be borne in mind when the advisability of establishing isolated homesteads for individual families is discussed.

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431 commensurable value to the incommensurable gratitude, friendship,
436 or respect which he wants to express. He prefers to exchange his coins for some other object, possibly of far less practical value to the recipient. The African chief, on the contrary, is more flattered on receiving a coin, however small, than anything else, because, as he says: 'money is respect (*amacushi*)'. Small coins are constantly used as presents of honour to relatives, and it is quite common for a servant who wants to make an elegant gift to his white master to do so by presenting him with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit. Sums of money are used as compensation in cases of injury or insult.

436 In particular ceremonies money again performs special func-
[535 tions. At a marriage or an initiation rite coins are used instead
934] of the old bark-cloth, and also as a payment for ritual services or as a means of removing taboos. Sixpence or a shilling may be offered to the woman who lights a girl's fire on the morning after
[744] her marriage, to those who whitewash the hut after a funeral ceremony, or to remove a taboo on eating. At the ceremonial
•[643 founding of the chief's new village there is now a fixed tariff ranging
782] from 1*s.* to 10*s.* for the hereditary priests who are in charge of the rites, such as the lighter of the sacred fire, the opener of the sacred relic huts, or those who purify the chief, wake him ceremonially in the morning, or beat his hereditary drum. In all these cases the coins are used as valuables much as the ivory tusks, cloth, or bracelets of old days were employed, and their rarity makes them the most suitable objects available at the present day.

436 With this special attitude to money, it is not surprising that the
554 Bemba still consider it waste to use coins for the purchase of food. money is too rare and too hardly come by to be thrown away on a commodity that can be got in some other way. Only a few years before my visit an old woman was discovered dying of starvation in a disused hut on the motor road with a 2*s.* piece tied in a fold of her cloth. It had apparently never occurred to her to use the money to buy supplies on her journey to the mines to look for her son. Younger people have naturally changed in this respect, but it is still true to say that money is never 'wasted' (*ukupose*) on food unless it is absolutely necessary, as it is near the white towns. Even then the transition to a sale from a gift from a kinsman or a subject is a very gradual one. People buying from relatives pay less than the normal rate, and usually add some service to the transaction Chiefs buying from subjects, as we shall see, pay nominal

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offering to the ancestral spirits known as *ukupepa* until they have established their rule for a number of years.[1] The term 'shifting cultivator' carries some suggestion of feckless, impulsive conduct. It ill describes the Bemba's anxious consideration of new sites, the ritual precautions they observe for so long when moving their settlements, their efforts to keep perpetual continuity between successive villages, the long probationary period before they are ready to consider themselves established, and their affection for the *icibolya* left behind.

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*Village Sites of Chiefs.*

The *icibolya* of a chief is a place of particular interest. I have been led miles out of my route to look at what was said to be an old village site of one of the Citimukulus, but was now quite indistinguishable from the rest of the bush. Such spots would be shown me with the same kind of reverence and possessive pride with which we might display a ruined castle to a foreign sightseer! Even when the exact geographical position of such sites has been forgotten, their names are often remembered to the present day. Chiefs, as distinct from commoners, give new names to each fresh village they build, and the life of a capital lasts longer than that of the ordinary *umushi*. This name, which is always bestowed by the ruler himself, is supposed to make allusive reference to some decision he has recently taken, or to a topical event. For instance, the late Nkula called the new village he founded in 1934 *Mano yarepa*, 'Common sense is short', because his people refused at first to follow him to a new village site and then hurried after him when they found what good land he had chosen. Even some temporary grass huts the Citimukulu had been living in for the previous two years had a name alluding to the fact that the people had refused to co-operate in building the new *umuzemba*. Many such village names survive from the past. Any old man who tells the well-known tale of the migration of the Bemba from Lubaland to their present territory, gives a list of the names of successive villages built by the immigrant chiefs *en route*, while in narratives of more recent years dates are placed with a reasonable degree of accuracy by describing events as having occurred when a particular Citimukulu was still living on such-and-such a site. Some chiefs are nicknamed by the title of a village or its neighbouring river,

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[1] Cf. Chap. XVII.

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e.g. *Mwamba wa pa Milenge*, 'The Mwamba who built on the Milenge River'.

This strong feeling for the preservation of the sites of old capitals is expressed ritually in a number of ways. After the burial of a chief the dead man's hut must be ceremonially destroyed, *ukutoba itembwe*, and a sacrifice of an ox offered. After the rubble on the house site has rotted away, a spirit shrine (*ulufuba*) is built on the spot, and prayers offered there subsequently. Many such shrines are still honoured. The ritual performed there ultimately depends on the Bemba belief, which natives readily express, that the *imipashi*, besides going up and down the land, being present in the huts of their descendants at dusk or dawn, or lingering on burial groves, may be expected to frequent the village site which they inhabited in life, and on which they died, and that they may readily be invoked there.[1]

The intense interest of the Bemba in these historical sites in their neighbourhood has a considerable sociological importance. Malinowski has given us information from a Melanesian Island to show how clan myths associated with certain geographical spots in the territory, constantly repeated by its members, and said to be owned by them, form what he calls a 'mythical charter' for the right to use the land.[2] Among the Bemba there is no developed mythology of the doings of miraculous beings associated with different localities, but many historical traditions of the actions of former chiefs, and of the whereabouts of their villages. One can only imagine that the performance of rites at these deserted sites, or even the constant narration of different happenings associated with these ancient *ifibolya*, gives the natives a valuable assurance that such powerful chiefs actually did live in the particular area and may be called upon to protect it, and that the present holder of the title, as the direct descendant of men who built capitals all over the district, has the requisite power to approach them.

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Burial-places, as distinct from deserted village sites, are forgotten quickly. The mortuary ritual of a commoner is hurried and unimpressive, and the burial-ground of a village is a place avoided by natives, and on which no rites are carried out. Chiefs are buried in clumps of evergreen swamp forests. The Citimukulu, Mwamba, Nkula, Cewe, and Nkweto at the big thicket known

[1] Chap. XVII.

[2] Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, 1934, vol. i, pp. 341–58.

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241 823 they lie sometimes eight or ten miles away. The word *icitemene* is derived from *kutema* (to cut down trees) and it is applied to a new millet garden in the course of being cleared and prepared for sowing. Hence Government reports now refer to the '*citemene* system' to describe the characteristic Bemba method of clearing the bush. However the garden, after it has been sown, is known as an *ubukula* (plur. *amakula*), and in its second and subsequent years of life, when it is planted with other crops, it is called an *icifwani* (plur. *ififwani*) and continues under this name until the cultivated land reverts to bush. The average size of an *ubukula* has been calculated to be about one acre, for which a strip of bush about eight acres is usually cleared of trees, but the gardens, though roughly circular, have no fixed size or shape. A smaller *ubukula* usually less than a quarter of an acre in size, such as those planted with fast-growing millet (*mwangwe*), is known as an *akakumba* (*plur. ukukumba*).

823 It will be seen, therefore, that the descriptive terms applied to land never refer to fixed units of measurement, but either to the political district in which a man lives, to a natural vegetation division in which his successive villages are usually built (*mpanga*), or to the temporary use to which the land is being put (*mputa*, *icitemene*, *icifwani*, &c.).

*The Chief as Land-owner.*

423 622 •643 A Bemba's right to the use of any part of the bush depends upon his political allegiances, first to a headman and then to a chief. He cannot cultivate as an isolated individual, even though he has uncontested rights of ownership of any land he may have cleared. Every Bemba reckons himself the subject of a territorial chief. He calls himself the '*umucina*' (subject, connexion of, member of) such-and-such a ruler, e.g. *umucina* Citimukulu, the subject of Citimukulu or by the historic name of the *icalo* itself, *umucina* Lubemba, an inhabitant of Lubemba.[1] In the first place, then, how does his status as a subject actually determine his use of land? What right has he to select in the *icalo* of his chief a strip of bush for a village site, or for agricultural purposes?

[1] The word '*umucina*' is difficult to translate. Besides the meanings given above, husband and wife refer to each other as *umucina wandi*, 'the person connected with me, or with whom I am tied', and a football team on the copper-belt uses the word for a member of the team. It must be distinguished from *umwine*, the owner of a thing or leader of an affair.

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In answer to a direct question as to the ownership of his *icalo* any chief will reply quite simply that the whole territory belongs to him, together with the food that is produced in it, its game and fish, and the labour of its people. 'It is my land, all of it! Every bit of the bush (*Calo candi conse! Mpangafye yonse!*)', said Citimukulu to me when describing his territorial rights. But it is important to know what such a grandiose statement actually means in terms of concrete fact. How and when does the Bemba chief exert his triple claim to own the land, the food, and the labour of his *icalo*?

Most Bantu chiefs claim to be regarded as the supreme landlord of their territories, and, in many cases, particularly in South Africa, they do actually determine the use to which it is put. Among the Southern Bantu, for instance, it is usual for the chief to allot land for cultivation to his *nduna* or headmen, who in turn distribute it to the people. He also reserves prior rights to particular grazing grounds or other soil of value. The land shortage resulting from European settlement all over Africa has given great importance to this prerogative. In East Africa the Ganda king appoints his nominees to rule over different districts as chiefs, moving them at will from place to place. To these territorial heads the peasant must apply for a strip of land to cultivate. He may be given a plot anywhere in the district, whether near his own kinsmen's village or not, and he pays dues to the chiefs at whose pleasure he holds the ground. This right of allotting land has had important practical consequences, since it formed the basis of the system of rent payments to landlords instituted by the Uganda Agreement of 1900.[1]

Bemba chiefs, though they claim just as complete an overlordship over their land, do not actually allot ground for cultivation. Their own wealth they reckon in terms of the numbers of their subjects, not by the amount of land in their possession. The only district map that would be of use to them would be one showing the density distribution of the population. The Paramount Chief had the right to 'give' a district to one of his relatives in the old days, and he still appoints the successors to the territorial chieftainships. He may also give a village to one of his near relatives—usually a son, a daughter, or a maternal nephew—and he does so frequently even at the present day, placing his own

[1] L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century*, 1934, Chap. VI.

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nominee in a position of authority over the local group. By so doing he gives his relatives the right to command the service of their villagers however difficult it may be to exact such labour nowadays. But these royal headmen have no more power to determine the use of land than has a commoner, and probably they do not cultivate much more. To a commoner the chief merely grants permission to settle in his *icalo* as a member of a village community under the rule of a particular headman, and here he may choose what land he pleases. The supply is so plentiful that the question of exact distribution is not a matter of great importance. It is the political affiliation that counts. The chief looks upon a man as a subject and not as a tenant, although the status of subject does actually confer the right to use land.[1]

The statement that 'all the land is mine' does not then mean that the ruler has the right to take any piece of ground he chooses for his own use. His own gardens are made in the neighbourhood of the capital, and in any one year it is expected that commoners will wait to cut trees for their *ifitemene* until the chief has chosen the site he wants. But after that the people are free to clear the bush where they please. The same is true of the choice of land to be used for the village beds. At the founding of Citimukulu's new village in 1934 I found that the chief had already marked out his *mputa* and had sown them with Kaffir corn before any commoners had started to dig their beds, or to build their houses. In the succeeding April the chief went out to choose a site for his big millet gardens, and after this the villagers began to select their own sites.

I never heard of a case where a chief took land that had already been occupied by a commoner. It would not have paid him to do so. In the old days he would have been expected to feed any inhabitant of the capital who was hungry, and nowadays, when

[1] Very little has so far been published as to the position of the chief among other N. Rhodesian tribes. Among the Bisa of the Bangweolu swamps and the contiguous Baushi and Baunga, the chief seems to have no rights of allocating land, confirmed J. Coxhead: 'The Native Tribes of N.E. Rhodesia', *J.R.A.I.*, Occasional papers No. 5; but among the cattle-owning tribes of the Nyasaland border (Ngoni and Cewa) and along the Kafue river (Ila)—both areas where southern influence is prominent—the chiefs claim the right to allot land for cultivation or for grazing, either directly or through the local headmen. Cf. J. Coxhead, op. cit., p. 24. Smith and Dale, 1920, op. cit., vol. i, p. 307. The same is also true of the Lamba. C. Doke, op. cit., p. 89.

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natives are much more free to move about the country than formerly, he would be afraid his subjects would leave him. I have, however, seen a case of a chief borrowing land temporarily. In November 1931 Nkula asked one of the villagers for the use of his garden mounds so that he might sow them with ground-nuts for one season. The word used was *ukuashima*, or 'to borrow', and in this case the original owner of the beds had apparently the right to ask the chief for ground-nuts for the use of his family at any time he pleased. I saw the chief hand him over a large sack on his request. Otherwise the commoner's rights to land he has occupied seem to be respected, and according to native informants the same held good even of the autocratic rulers of pre-European days.

On the other hand it is impossible for a Bemba to cultivate in a chief's territory without the latter's permission. In the old days if one chief trespassed, even unwittingly, on the ground of another, the former had to give a substantial present such as an elephant tusk or a cow to the latter. Nowadays Citimukulu told me he would expect a gift of beer, even if it were a close relative who had made a garden within the boundary of his *icalo*. It is apparently a usual way of picking a quarrel to start cutting trees over another chief's borders, ill-defined though the latter often are. The late Nkula, giving evidence before a white magistrate during a case of disputed succession, said, 'I knew he wanted to claim the stool (i.e. office of chieftainship) because he sent men to cut trees on my land.'

A commoner, as distinct from a fellow chief, has to come and make obeisance to the *mfumu* and ask permission to settle. He usually brings a present to court, and is welcomed as adding to the economic assets of the district. Near Kasama in 1934 I once met Citimukulu touring his villages. Two elderly men from the territory of Makassa, near Abercorn, about 100 miles away, arrived with their younger relatives carrying a gourd of beer. They rolled on the ground and clapped (the usual formal salute) and said they wanted to settle at a certain village, but that the inhabitants were hostile to the suggestion. The Paramount received them with enthusiasm, always keen to add to the number of his subjects. He told them to settle where they wanted to cultivate, and to bring him tribute of what they grew. In the old days failure to get formal permission to cut trees in any *icalo* would have been punished by seizure of half the crop, or the burning of the cut branches

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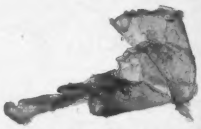



before they had been properly piled.[1] I was told that nowadays a chief would not take such a drastic step, but that he would certainly send for the intruder and demand tribute. The shifting cultivator is not free to build a hut where he pleases, although in this empty country he is not limited as to the amount of bush he clears.

*The Chief's Supernatural Powers.*

It must be remembered too that a Bemba wants not only the right to make a garden, but also an assurance that the bush he cultivates will give him food. Now the productive capacity of the *mpanga* depends, he believes, entirely on the beneficence of the tutelary deities associated with it, and the goodwill of these supernatural beings can only be secured by the prayers of the chief and his observance of a particular way of life. When the Bemba chief is installed (*ukupyanika*) he acquires, as guardian spirits, the *imipashi* of the dead rulers of the land, of whom he is of course the lineal descendant in the matrilineal line. Thereafter he is believed in his own person to affect the fortunes of his land. He is 'to spread his spittle in blessing on the land' (*ukufunga mate mu calo*); he is to rectify it (*ukulungame calo*); he is to work it (*ukubombele calo*). In fact the Paramount should not leave his territory for fear that its fertility should suffer, and in March 1934, when the Citimukulu was summoned to Lusaka to meet Prince George, he was obliged to offer special prayers and cloth to his *imipashi*, explaining the compulsion put upon him. He told the spirits that the Europeans to whom they had given the land must be obeyed. 'We have got to go on a journey. Those who installed us in this land, your people, have called us to see the son of the King. Now we cannot refuse. No, not to those who gave us many possessions and money and many cloths. You Kampampa Mutanshi (the first ancestor) here is your cloth! You the Great one, who gave the land to Pokili (the next ancestor) so that he might stay in the capital. Let Lubemba prosper. For we are going to strange lands. Farewell.'[2]

[1] Cullen Gouldsbury denies this and says that a pot of beer only need be given to the chief by a tribesman while a member of another tribe would have to accept the rule of the chief and then give half the product of his gardens as tribute. Cullen Gouldsbury, 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xiv, no. lvi, 1915, p. 375.

[2] *Tuli no bulendo. Abatuteka mu calo, bantu benu, na batuita kukuya mona*

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The illness of the chief is liable to bring misfortune, or rather to be associated with a general condition of ill luck, and is even now a source of fear, as I observed myself on several occasions. At his death the prosperity of the land is brought to an end just as the political organization is temporarily at a standstill. No crops are planted by the chief's family and no first-fruit rites are done. *Icalo cawa.* (The land has fallen down, i.e. the state has collapsed.) The sex life of the chief has also a mysterious effect on the welfare of all his people. His sexual power gives vigour and 'warmth' to the land. Hence the phrase *ukukafye calo* (to warm the land), and the rule that a territorial chief should never sleep with a woman when travelling outside his territory.[1] By a sexual act the *mfumu* can bless seeds or other objects required for the use of the tribe. But this power is alike the cause of danger. By breaking a sex taboo—such as approaching the spirits without the right ceremony of purification, the ruler can bring incalculable harm on the community. Of such a man I heard the comment, 'Why does he like women? Does not that imperil the land? That is not a chief. No!'[2]

Besides this powerful and mysterious influence over the land and its people, the chief is also able to influence their destinies by his power of access to the tribal spirits. This right is based on his possession of the *benye* or sacred relics by which the most powerful ancestral spirits of the Bemba can be invoked, and also by his supreme control over the spirit-centres of his whole *icalo.* The economic rites he performs at these different shrines will be described in detail later. Suffice it now to say that this supreme control over the supernatural resources of the *icalo* gives the territorial chief what Edwin Smith has called the 'spiritual ownership'[3]

*mwana Cingi. Nomba teti tukane yo. E batupela fyuma fingi, ne ndalama, ne nsalu shingi. Mwe Kampampa Mutanshi imyala yobe! Ni mwe mukalamba, mwapela Pokili ukuti ekale pa musumba. Nomba lubuke lubemba. Ifwe twalaya mu fyalo. Shyalempo!*

[1] The Paramount in any case should not leave his district.

[2] *Cinshi baletemwa ku banakashi. Te kucile calo? Te mfumu iyi! Yo!*

[3] Cf. E. W. Smith and A. Dale, op. cit., vol. i, p. 388. It is important to realize that in many parts of Africa the spiritual owner of the land is not identical with the political owner. A warrior people extends its boundaries and occupies land under the guardianship of the tutelary spirits of other tribes. In this area it is common to find that in territory seized by the Bemba from the neighbouring Bisa or Lala during the last century, the conquering people are offering prayers to the dead chiefs of the conquered, and are dependent for this purpose on the services of a Bisa or Lala priest. The chief Nkula sends cloth to Mungulube, the

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of the land, and the Paramount chief who has to initiate all the economic rites of the *icalo*, has thus the supernatural overlordship of the whole Bemba territory.

But the question that concerns us immediately here, is whether this spiritual ownership of the *icalo* by the territorial chief actually affects its productive use, in other words, the rights of each individual to cultivate the land. If we are to consider as the study of land tenure 'the relationship of man to soil in its widest sense', as Malinowski suggests, then the position of the chief as a combined ruler, landlord, and priest is obviously a relevant factor.[1] The people's belief that the productive capacity of the land depends ultimately on the prayers of a ruler descended from the original occupants of the land, is the basis of their system of local grouping into villages under a headman who performs subsidiary rites to local deities, and a chief who is responsible for the communal rites and for the welfare of each *icalo*. It is also the sanction for the chief's political authority and economic prerogatives, and however much these religious beliefs have weakened at the present day, they are still the dominant force behind the politico-economic machine.

Thus for the chief's claim that 'all the land is mine', we might substitute the explanation that the chief is the spiritual overlord of his *icalo*, and that on this fact depends his power to organize economic units for its exploitation and to receive dues: that he reserves the privilege to select garden sites for himself near his own village, but that he never claims the right to seize land occupied by others, or to allocate ground for cultivation to his subjects as is the custom in many other Bantu tribes. Any individual Bemba can cultivate as much ground as he pleases in the *icalo*, if he is a member of a village community, accepts the status of a subject and fulfils the resultant obligations to his chief. Otherwise he cannot settle in the district at all. This discussion of the

descendant of one of the dispossessed Bisa chiefs near his capital and asks him to pray to the 'owners of the land' (*bene*). At Kasaka, near Shiwa Ndandu, the Bemba headman descendant of a family sent from Lubemba to occupy Bisa country, has put up seven shrines to Bisa spirits, known or unknown, whom he believes to be associated with his village site. He is still anxious lest he should have forgotten some. In other cases one branch of a clan has become localized in an outlying district of Bemba country and claims control of the local shrines, and the head of the family demands dues of fish or game in consequence.

[1] Cf. Malinowski's definition of land tenure, *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, vol. i, p. 319.

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relation between the political and religious functions of the chief and his rights as a landlord has certain practical implications. At a time when money payments are being substituted for old tribal dues in many parts of Africa, it is important to be clear what the Bemba chief originally claimed, and still claims, and it can be stated definitely that however peremptory his demands on his people's labour and garden produce, he seems to have left them complete security as to their use of land and to have allowed them the right to select particular plots—a freedom probably associated with the ample supply of land in this area.

*Tribute on Land.*

We must now turn to the second claim of the Bemba chief, viz. that he owns not only his land, but also the food that is produced in it. 'Everything is theirs!' (i.e. the chiefs') as Candamale, formerly the hereditary burier of the royal family, expressed it, 'The meat, the fish, all the trees, all the land, and the honey'[1]—which is equivalent to saying that the Bemba chief gives his subjects permission to settle in his territory, but that all the crops they grow belong by right to him. Our problem is to discover the forms in which these dues are exacted.

This is a difficult aspect of land tenure to analyse. The economic privileges and duties of African kings have suffered inevitable changes with the institution of European government and the introduction of a money currency. Bemba chiefs and elders speak with enthusiasm of the 'good old days' when subjects brought constant gifts of food to the capital. 'All day long they carried tribute (*batula*). They brought millet and beer and meat. They were always bringing tribute. There was always food at the *umusumba*!' is a typical account of the state of affairs as they delight to describe it.

From these day-dreams of a glorious past it is difficult to extract a case of concrete fact. The most extreme instance of the exercise of the chief's rights of ownership over food seemed to me to be contained in an old councillor's memory of an actual incident which took place before the coming of the white man. He told me that in the reign of Cikwanda, a former Paramount, a rich commoner had fled the territory of his chief to take refuge elsewhere. The Paramount immediately sent a messenger to the headman of the fugitive's village saying to him, 'Take possession of X's food,

[1] *Shyonse shyabo! Inama, lisabi, imiti yonse, ne calo conse, no buci!*

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643 and look after it for the chief'.[1] The relatives of the exile had
651 apparently no rights at all to his property. When I commented to the present Citimukulu on the apparent injustice of this action he said, in defence of his ancestors, 'Well, but all the food and all the gardens belonged to the *mfumu* in any case', thus expressing the rights of ownership in the most absolute form. But it is clear that in the ordinary course of events the chief limited himself to certain dues, such as demands for food for himself and for his followers in any emergency, hospitality when travelling through his domains, and a regular tribute of certain crops, game, and fish. All these claims are exercised at the present day, to however limited an extent.

622 All Bemba chiefs get food brought them whenever they travel,
651 as do also royal princesses holding titles, and sometimes the sons, nephews, and grandsons of the royal family. Two headmen of villages on the roadside told me they were excused paying annual
484 tribute because they had regularly to entertain their chiefs
643 when travelling to and from the Government office at Kasama. Another headman who had given up carrying annual tribute to the capital, owing to the distance, still claimed that he would bring flour, chickens, and beer to the *mfumu* if he heard the latter was travelling through the district. Young men at work with Europeans bring the chief no tribute in kind, but near Kasama sometimes carry him sums of money varying from 1*s*. to 3*s*. when he visits the Boma there. I saw the employees on the estate of Shiwa Ngandu give the late Nkula 1*s*. or 2*s*. each when he came on tour.

622 The people readily admit also their duty to give the chief food
651 when he sends for it, and indeed with primitive methods of storage it would be almost impossible otherwise for him to accumulate
643 enough food at the capital to suffice for sudden emergencies, such as the arrival of honoured visitors, or the presence of councillors on tribal business. The process of brewing which demands anything from four to seven days for completion also makes it difficult for the wives of a chief to keep sufficient beer for all occasions. During 1933–4, a year of shortage owing to locust raids, I saw Citimukulu send out constantly for millet, fish, and beer to feed

[1] *Ulebakile mfumu fyakulya fya kampanda*. Cf. also Cullen Gouldsbury's statement that the chief would put a taboo on the gardens of a man who left him without permission. 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xv, no. lix, 1916, p. 175.

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his councillors during a long series of meetings held to discuss the deposition of one of the hereditary officials, the appointment of the chief's new head wife, and the building of his new capital. He also sent out for food and beer for himself and his wives. I also saw many instances at the courts of Citimukulu, Nkula, and Mwamba of the chief's practice of sending a messenger round neighbouring villages to ask for beer on the sudden arrival of visiting chiefs or Government officials. In November 1931 the chief Lucembe received a messenger at 8 a.m. to announce the arrival of a neighbouring Bisa chief, Cunda Ponde, to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. Lucembe carried on a ten minutes' conversation with the messenger, during which time he was evidently thinking hard. The moment he was alone he dispatched followers in four different directions to fetch beer, mentioning certain villages by name. It arrived slung on poles, and carried at a jog trot, at about noon, for it is the business of a chief to know exactly which of his villages has supplies of any particular food at any given time. In fact one of the important functions of the administrative officials and messengers who go between one *umusumba* and another is to report on the state of the millet harvest, the ground-nuts, and legumes of the villages through which they pass and the game killed there, and the chief's need of supplies at the capital is one of his greatest incentives to encourage agricultural production.

A regular annual tribute in certain foods (*ukutula*) is a due considered apart from these unexpected levies on supplies. The payment of such tribute is almost universal among Bantu peoples. Here it consists of an offering made on each year's harvest (millet in particular), beer and also, under certain conditions, a tribute on game, fish, or honey found in the bush. It is difficult to be clear how big this tribute was in the old days. At present the people tend to exaggerate its size—the chief because he is anxious to show how powerful he is, and the commoners because they like to complain of their sufferings. Both the chiefs Nkula and Lucembe told me on the first day of my visits to them that their subjects brought them 'one or two' baskets of millet every harvest as well as beer, but afterwards started to grumble as to the difficulties of getting their dues enforced, and I saw myself that the supplies brought in were actually small.

Thus of fourteen villages in which I collected figures in 1933–4 three had sent no tribute, one having special exemption on ritual

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622 651 643 grounds; one fishing village had sent three carrying baskets of fish, one voluntarily and two sent for; five had sent two gourds of beer each voluntarily; two had sent one gourd of beer and one carrying basket of millet; and two were waiting to send gifts until the chief asked for them. These figures show that the due is not fixed at the present time, but that an offering of some kind or other is usually made during the year. It is important to note that the contribution is made from the village as a whole. It is as a member of a village that a man gets permission to cultivate land, and it is the community as a whole under the leadership of the appointed headman which makes the offering. To collect it the headman puts an empty basket outside his hut and calls on each housewife to make her contribution. The levy on each person would thus be little more than 2 or 3 lb. per head, or about 3*d*. worth at current rates.

The tribute of game and fish comes under a different heading. In all Bantu societies so far described the chief gets a portion of an animal killed, or found dead in the bush, with special rights to some animals such as the elephant or hippo, and to leopard [777] skins. To the Bemba the finding of game in the bush is essentially a matter of luck—the good fortune which only the *imipashi* can bring if approached by the ruling chiefs in the right way. Hence it used to be considered particularly important to carry a portion of the meat as a present to the capital as well as to the headman's hut.[1] In the old days, the meat of all big animals such as elephants or hippopotami belonged to the chief, and such game was in fact hunted only at his orders. A part of any buck killed in nets or pits would also be carried to the capital. The chief's portion does not seem to have been specified very clearly, and was variously described to me as either a front leg and breast or a hind leg. Nowadays game is scarce, and the powers of the chief greatly diminished, but it is still true that the inhabitants of a capital probably bring the whole of the buck to the chief for distribution; those in the neighbourhood bring a portion of the animal, while in distant villages tribute is brought in the case of unusual good luck or an unexpected find of a dead animal in the bush—treasure trove to which a chief has particular rights.

In the case of fish, the supply is too irregular to make possible an annual tribute, except from villages lying in the big rivers, such

[1] Though the chief must have been powerful to enforce these rights and people admit that game was sometimes 'hidden in the bush' (*ukufisa mu mpanga*).

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as the Chambesi. The supply of dried fish from these areas was formerly an important asset of the chief of the district, and even nowadays Citimukulu and Nkula appear to get one or more big carrying-baskets of fish from these fishing communities each year, and more if the supply is plentiful.

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In conclusion, therefore, it is clear that the *mfumu's* claim to own the food of his *icalo* is limited to his demand for supplies in times of emergency, to hospitality when travelling, and to tribute of millet, beer, meat, and fish, and that the latter offerings are made by the headman of each village and not by an individual alone. It is impossible to compare the amounts of food received by the modern chief with those given to his predecessors, since we have no concrete facts to go upon. But it is evident that the people still acknowledge the claims of the modern ruler to some tribute, however small, and even in cases where the *mfumu* is forced to pay money for food, as happens occasionally, he is yet expected to give less than the current prices for the goods. In April 1934 I saw Citimukulu pay money for beer during a time of great shortage, but he got two gourds of beer for one shilling instead of one, and Nkula, during the previous November, bought millet with salt, but again gave less than the usual rates of exchange.[1] The old *ukutula* dues have neither completely lapsed, nor have they been superseded by money payments. Hence, their economic and political importance lasts to the present day.

The substitution of money for tribute in kind has only taken place to a very small extent in this area. Many South African chiefs are able to levy substantial dues on the earnings of their own men at the mines. Schapera states that it is common for a tribute of one pound to be demanded by a chief from all those who have been away at work. He gives an example of a Tschwana chief, who, as early as 1882, sent an age-grade to Kimberley to earn £8 apiece to buy guns and ammunition, and recently (1932) of another who made a levy of £5 for a National school.[2] In

[1] In somewhat the same way most Bemba women are willing to sell grain to the Government at less than they can get from their fellows. In spite of the patient effort of officials to explain to them that they are perfectly free agents in the matter many are themselves convinced that they are under compulsion to bring what the Government send for, and to accept any price offered, and that they win the favour of the authorities by so doing.

[2] *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. I. Schapera, 1934, p. 46; also I. Schapera, 'Economic Conditions in a Bechuanaland Native Reserve', *S. African Journal of Science*, vol. xxx, 1933, p. 645.

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622 651 643 the absence of tribal treasuries in all the Native territories of South Africa, levies have been make in cash for building schools, making roads, boring for water, &c. In the Bemba area the amount of money in circulation is very limited and the recent institution of tribal treasuries will make it possible for various social services to be provided from this source. There is also the historical fact that the chiefs of the Southern Bantu had formerly the right to 'eat up' the cattle of their subjects and hence it is but a small extension of this right to 'eat up' cash earnings. In the Bemba country, on the other hand, there was very little property in the possession of a commoner that his chief could seize.

*Tribute Labour.*

It only remains to discuss the third claim of the Bemba chief, viz. that all the labour of his people is his by right. All Bantu chiefs of whom we have any information have claims to the labour of their subjects. The tribe itself is in essence a chiefdom, a body of men who are loyal to one ruler. From the historical material we have available, it is clear that such units were built up first on a kinship basis. To the body of men who acknowledged kinship, real or fictitious, to one chief were added other elements, until the group grew to a large size. It was allegiance to the one chief which kept these people together through their long period of migrations and constant wars. The subjects of a chief were his men in a particular sense, even though the position of the freeman was distinguished from that of the slave in areas where subject peoples were incorporated as servants, or the institution of slavery existed.

The service a man owed his chief was either economic or military, that is to say, he might be employed in the cultivation of the royal gardens, clearing the roads, or building the chief's huts, or, in the old days, he might serve as a warrior. In some cases, the service a subject owed was specified and the army or labour force was organized. In other cases, the chief had a general right to call for assistance when in need. Thus, among the Nguni group of 622 651 171 South Africa, and in particular among the Zulu and Swazi, the tribal organization on an age-grade basis was adapted to further military ambitions, and the subjects' service to their chief resembled a form of conscription, in which every young man of the tribe was drafted into a 'regiment' held in readiness to work for the king in

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291
482
415

Tribute labour. Carrying in the Paramount Chief's crop of ground-nuts, 1933.

Tribute. Fishing villages send four baskets of fish as their dues to the Paramount Chief, who is sitting with his beer-pot on top of the mound, 1933.

Tribute labour. Carrying blessed seed to sow Chief Nkula's millet garden, 1933.

[facing p. 256]

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622 651 [70] his gardens, cattle kraals, village, or on the battle-field. Such an organized labour force still exists to-day in Swaziland in the *amabutho* or regiments of the Swazi chief.[1]

622 643 651 Among the Central Bantu, the chiefs had despotic powers over their subjects—in fact the right of life or death.[2] They had also general claims to the service of their people in whatever way it was needed. The Bemba king was the ruler of a military tribe as was the Zulu chief, but his army was evidently less highly organized than in the case of the Southern Bantu, and it was the village that provided the military contingent, not the age-grade. Over and above this, each chief was able to exact special dues of service to be used for agricultural purposes, known by the term *umulasa*. Our problem, therefore, is to discover the form in which these specific dues of tribute labour are exacted and how they affect the people's right to use the land. Is the service given in return for permission to cultivate, as the squatter on a European farm works so many months of the year in lieu of rent; or is the *umulasa* work given as part of a series of political dues by which a man's allegiance to his chief is expressed?

At present, the tribute service is a specified one and not a very extensive obligation. The exaggerated demands made by some of the South African chiefs on their subjects are not found in this area. The people rarely work more than two or three days a year and are very seldom called up more than once.

The amount of tribute labour demanded formerly is difficult to estimate. Here again survivors from the past delight to exaggerate the splendour of their rulers. They tell of the numbers of commoners who used to pour into the capital to serve the Citimukulu and they describe their work. It consisted for the men of tree-cutting, hut-building, hoeing, fencing, sowing, and in some cases of the traditional female occupations such as piling branches and reaping; while the women piled branches, reaped, carried in millet or ground-nuts from distant granaries, cleared paths or pulled up ground-nuts. These are still the tasks for which *umulasa* labour is used. The tribute service was and still is an act of recognition of

[1] H. Beamer, 'The Development of Military Organization in Swaziland', *Africa*, vol. x, 1937.

[2] If a family took summary revenge for a murder they had, according to Gouldsbury, to pay the chief a slave, as they had killed one of his people without permission. Cullen Gouldsbury, 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xiv, no. liii, 1914, p. 381.

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622 651 643 the chief's authority as well as an economic task carried out for him. Nowadays labourers who arrive at the capital must do formal obeisance to the chief by rolling on the ground in front of him and clapping (*ukutota*), and when they leave they repeat the process with full ceremony. Chiefs seemed to me to speak of this act of homage with pleasure. One described the *umulasa* system in words like this. 'They come: they work for three days: I make them porridge and then they come and make obeisance and go.' It is interesting to watch the men and women returned from the fields gathering on the outskirts of the village so that they may all walk in to the chief's enclosure together, and make their salute formally.

622 651 177 643 The *umulasa* system itself has been very strongly affected by European contact. In the early days of British administration it was discouraged, though never actually forbidden. Now many officials seem conscious of the value of the system as maintaining the chief's authority, but the latter's rights to *umulasa* cannot be enforced in a white court since they are held to be contrary to the Geneva Conventions on 'Forced Labour'. This lack of Government support has lead to the refusal of many natives to do their service. The introduction of paid labour has also struck at the roots of the system. 'The white man came to teach us not to work except for money', one old Bemba said, when bewailing the uncompromising attitude of the modern youth.[1] The exact amount of labour now done for the chief is difficult to assess. It is clearly very much less than before. Of twelve villages I visited during 1931 and 1933 five had sent no labour during the year (three of these owing to ritual privilege) and the others had sent contingents varying from two men and women to ten and twelve women respectively. The service is limited now by common consent to the inside of a week or even three days. From figures taken at Citimukulu's village during a nine-month period from April to December 1933, I estimate that 561 men were called up to work and 329 women, and that these worked on an average 3·89 days in

[1] The common association in the native mind between Christianity and European economic values is clear from the statement of a young Bemba asked to help some one in a difficulty, 'I am a Christian. I don't do things for nothing.'

[2] The figures of men-days worked were as follows:

MEN. Tree-cutting 855; piling branches 143; sowing millet 89; reaping sorghum 68; fetching food from different villages 14.

WOMEN. Piling branches 446; carrying grain from temporary granaries 146;

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the case of the men and 3·5 days for the women.[2] These labourers were drawn from 81 villages out of 160 showing that it is very far from true that every Bemba works for his chief at the present time. Added to this the number of adult males at work outside the territory means that the supply of available labour is almost halved. Two small chieftainesses, Canda we Eiya and Mulenga, complained that they could get no gardens made for them without the support of their territorial chiefs, and in May 1933 Mwamba, one of the biggest of the latter, had chosen the site for his capital, but could not get sufficient labour to build it until the copper slump sent men home to their villages. Citimukulu himself constantly grumbled that he could not get his gardens made, and even his band of personal followers and singers was very much reduced.

It is nevertheless a fact that the chief's rights are still recognized, even if he cannot always enforce them. Where money payments are substituted for tribute labour—and this only takes place very occasionally—it is an accepted principle that the *mfumu* should pay below the current rate. Thus in March 1934 Citimukulu summoned two bricklayers to work *umulasa* for him, offering them 2*s.* 6*d.* a week instead of 7*s.* 6*d.*, the current wage, and this sum was considered generous. Chiefs also pay the tax of some of their followers, in return for work done, and in this case the latter usually get food and other court perquisites, and do an indefinite amount of labour. I saw Nkula pay a 4*s.* court fine for two subjects who were unable to find the money, but he ordered them to build him a house in return, for which the current pay was 10*s.* The legitimate claims of the chief to service are still perfectly well recognized in compromise arrangements of this kind.

It is also obvious that no system has yet been devised as a substitute for *umulasa* labour. To pay even the small force of labour Citimukulu employed during the period in which I took notes, he would have required nearly £56 at the current rate of wages out of a total annual salary of £60 for all personal and tribal expenses. So that it must be acknowledged that even if the *umulasa* system

hoeing village beds 126; fetching fish and other foods 76; cleaning paths 96; digging up ground-nuts or Livingstone potato beds 68; reaping 12.

TOTAL 970 men-days.

For the building of the chief's new huts in a new village 807, including 421 spent making a brick court-house, as against 386 to build 10 huts of the ordinary type. 174 men-days were spent by the women in white-washing or making cement floors of the same houses.

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is functioning inefficiently at the present time (cf. p. 264) it is the only means by which the political machinery of the tribe continues to exist.

*Tribute as Rent.*

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It will be asked at once how far this tribute in labour and kind can be classed as rent? If by this term we mean a fixed amount of work or goods given in return for the right to use a fixed amount of land, then obviously the dues of the Bemba chief cannot be so described. They are part of a series of mutual obligations observed between subject and chief, of which the right to land is one of the gains to the commoner, and the right to service just one of a series of chiefly prerogatives. To make the situation clearer we should list the advantages both parties gained by the arrangement. Why did the commoner work for the chief? Partly because he was afraid of his power and partly because there were positive inducements to do so. We saw that a commoner who made a garden in the chief's *icalo* without permission was liable to have his crops seized in the old days. Some natives now say that refusal to work *umulasa* or *ukutula* would have meant mutilation in pre-European times: others argue, 'No. Since it would be stupid to cut off the hand of a man who would then be unable to work *umulasa* for his chief again.' One man told me that with the first default a man would have been scolded, and at the second his chickens and granary would have been seized. But in actual fact no old man I talked to could remember an actual instance of a man refusing to pay his dues, and I think such occasions were probably limited to open acts of defiance on the part of powerful young members of the royal clan trying to set up power on their own. Of commoners I constantly got the answer, *Ukuti bakana shyani?*, 'And why should they refuse?', with genuine surprise in the tone. The fact that the Bemba believed that their gardens were unlikely to yield without the chief's blessing has been stressed again and again in these pages. While some natives deny that the *imipashi* would refuse their beneficence to men who refused to work for their chief or give tribute, others assert equally emphatically that this is so, and all are convinced that it is definitely unlucky to offend him. To say of a chief, a white man, or any one in high authority that he is angry (*ukufulwa*) is a serious thing, even at the present day. Small lapses are not expected to be followed automatically by

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supernatural punishment, but a series of broken obligations such as really to offend a chief are viewed with apprehension by young men as well as old.

Besides this it was the positive aim of every Bemba to win the good will of his chief as we have seen, and the headman who willingly brought workers for the *mfumu* was sure of favours sooner or later. It is possible to watch a headman courting the chief in this way even to-day, and he himself uses any privileges he has had confirmed under the Native Courts Ordinance, such as the right to give a man permission to build a village, to reward any subject who tries to please him.

The tribute labourers got food and beer during the visit and they worked under pleasant conditions in large gangs of friends. Even during my visit I never heard complaints of *umulasa* where the chiefs had means of feeding their workers, and the visit to the capital is considered an opportunity to meet relatives and celebrities, to put grievances before the chief, or to transact any other business. The people still definitely prefer their ruler to have a big granary. It gives them, I think, a sense of security—a feeling of certainty that there will be food at the capital and a knowledge that they are working for a powerful and successful man (cf. p. 214). Besides this, a hungry man has technically the right to call upon his chief for help. I did not hear of this claim being made very often, but still, in a sense, the *umulasa* garden and *umulasa* granary are recognized as belonging to the people. A man can steal from the tribute garden of a chief, but not from those of his wives, and I have sometimes heard old natives speak with pride of 'our' granary, adding, 'It was we who filled it to overflowing'. Thus the commoner got by his labour the sense of supernatural support, a personal approach to his chief, food in return for his work, support in time of starvation, and, as we shall see, leadership in economic pursuits. The chief in return got extra supplies of food to distribute, the means of supporting his tribal council, the necessary labour for tribal undertakings such as road-building, and last, but not least, prestige (cf. Chap. XII).

In brief the extravagant claims of the Bemba king to own all his land and everything that grows or lives in it, only gave him the right to exact small regular dues on the labour and produce of his people, and to call on them for further help in times of emergency. These levies exist, but are very much reduced to-day. They

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622 651 643 formed only one element in the relationship of mutual interdependence between subject and chief by which the commoner, in return for accepting the political authority of his ruler, gained complete security as to his rights of occupying any amount of land he could use. He still has this security to-day, and can still be certain of the right to use his land in any way he pleases, except of course by selling it.

*Land Tenure and Political Organization.*

The political organization of the Bemba is based very directly upon this system of land tenure as is the case in most Bantu societies. The *umulasa* system makes for tribal cohesion in a sparsely populated district, because it emphasizes the unity of the village community and brings the people in direct personal contact with their chief—possibly their only opportunity of meeting him during the year. For the young at any rate, the week spent at the capital is an education in the political machinery of the tribe, and a means by which the authority of the chief and his council is displayed. The bringing of tribute to the *umusumba* could not be defended on the grounds of economic efficiency alone. It is a common sight to see, for instance, meat brought a two days' journey from one part of an *icalo* and distributed in a rather high condition, to *umulasa* labourers from another, and the inhabitants of a village who brought a basket of millet as tribute to the chief, at one time of the year, might consume an almost identical amount of grain in the form of porridge when next arriving at the capital to do their *umulasa* labour. But where the economic life of the people is so clearly dominated by the political, the exaction of these dues on land has an important secondary function in maintaining authority in the tribe.

622 651 647 643 It is also obvious that it is the chief's right to tribute and labour that gives him sufficient surplus food to feed his servants, his executive officials, his panel of legal advisers, and his tribal council. Some of these live at the capital but do not willingly give their days to hearing cases unless the chief gives them beer or food.[1] Others come from long distances, and will only spend the necessary fortnight or three weeks at the *umusumba* if they are fed. Without a full granary the chief is apt to find his whole civil service, if we may

[1] Since my visit a payment of £1 a year to twenty-five of the *bakabilo* has been instituted. 'Pim Report,' p. 188.

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so call it, melt away. Besides this, his prestige will gradually go when he is no longer able to carry out his obligations on the same scale as before. The situation has in fact reached a kind of impasse at the moment. Because the *mfumu* gets less labour, he makes smaller gardens and has less food to feed his workers, so that they in their turn are less willing to serve him another year. From figures I collected during my visit it was clear that in some capitals the labourers were getting no food at all in return for their work. The late Nkula employed a hunter, and had a reputation for giving his people meat. Consequently he always seemed able to get work done for him. Sub-chief Lucembe was a hunter himself and lived in good game country. He was therefore in a fortunate position. But Citimukulu sometimes sent men away without food, or gave them one meal in two days, while the women were supposed to bring their own supplies and cook for themselves. Mukuikile, a sub-chief in the Mpika district, fed the men, but not the women. It is clear from these instances that the modern chief is no longer able to carry out his obligations to his people. Those who grumble at the chief's lack of hospitality have reason on their side, but to refuse to do their service as a protest increases the difficulty.

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As a second result, many chiefs now fail to keep their panel of advisers and councillors at court to transact the necessary tribal business. I have seen the Citimukulu hear cases alone with his clerk, and during 1934 the *bakabilo* summoned by him on important matters of business invariably melted away before the end of the meeting because they had not enough food. It took a period of three months of alternately summoning the council and then dismissing it because of shortage, before the work could be carried through.

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Chiefs are also beginning perforce to refuse food to the hungry, and even to their poor relations. In January 1934 Citimukulu gave up the distinction between his *umulasa* granary and his personal one, and fed his wife and family on anything he could lay hands on. The right to take food from the royal mounds (*mputa*) already limited to near relatives, was still further curtailed. In July 1933 I heard the guardian of the Paramount's granary walk round the village at night shouting, 'Listen everyone! Hunger has fallen! No one is to dig up cassava from the chief's *mputa*. If he is hungry let him come to the chief and make obeisance and he will be given something.' It is true that this failure of commissariat occurred during a year when the locusts had done their maximum damage and in

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622 657 643 the case of a chief who was plainly a poor organizer, but the art of chieftainship is difficult to practise even in the most advantageous conditions at the present time. A servant of the late Nkula, who was a chief of far greater ability than the Paramount, told me ruefully that his master no longer fed all the inhabitants of the capital as he used to. 'He just sends me round the village to sit with the elders of each division (*icitente*). If I hear so much grumbling that I am afraid they will begin to leave the capital, I tell the chief and he sends them what food he has.'

Such failures of the chief to provide for his subjects, little though he may be accountable for them, insensibly weaken his prestige at a time when the Government is most anxious to build on that attribute. The tradition of the generous king survives as a standard against which the modern ruler is constantly measured, and measured to his disadvantage. Despite all evidence to the contrary, the Bemba commoners continue to believe that their chiefs could give them more if they only tried. They make such remarks as, 'These are not chiefs at all! Look how much Citimukulu Ponde or Citapankwa gave our forefathers', and these memories actually determine the prestige given to a chief at the present day.

643 465 If it be asked whether the Bemba chiefs could not substitute money payments for *umulasa* dues, the answer is simply that their salaries are not large enough. The Paramount gets £60 a year, of which in 1934 he spent £22. 12*s*. on clothing his wives and family, £15. 10*s*. on paying and clothing his messengers, personal servants, and band, and £2. 10*s*. on cloth for the ancestral shrines, thus leaving for personal needs, demands from relatives, ammunition, &c. the sum of £18. 10*s*. 6*d*. or only 30*s*. a month.[1]

622 465 The other big chiefs have even smaller salaries, e.g. Mwamba has £50, Nkula £40, and some of the sub-chiefs as little as £10 a year. Added to this fundamental difficulty, the Bemba chiefs do not consider their salaries as funds to be used for the benefit of the tribe. They are something new, a sort of unexpected windfall given as a sign of the Government's favour. They are not yet part of the warp and woof of tribal organization. The food he gets, the chief distributes, the money he does not.[2] Nor does it seem that the newly instituted tribal treasuries perform any of the functions

[1] Cf. my 'Tribal Govern[illegible] in transition', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. xxxiv, no. cxxxvii, 1935, [illegible] a discussion on this whole question.

[2] To a body of discontented councillors Citimukulu explained, 'If I had any elephant tusks, you know I should give them to you.'

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without adequate provision for the running of the political machine, naturally reduces the efficiency of the chief and his council to a dangerous extent, and even with such a provision, the abolition of all voluntary service for the tribe brings one of the most educational influences to which Bemba youth is subject, to an end.

To conclude, Bemba rights to the use of land are part of a reciprocal series of obligations between subject and chief. The former accepts the political status of subject and membership of a village group. He gives respect, labour, and tribute to his chief, and in return he is able to cultivate as much land as he pleases and to occupy it for as long as he needs. The latter prays to the tribal spirits in order to make the land productive, initiates economic effort, feeds the hungry, and maintains his court and tribal councillors—all that the Bemba mean by saying that he is 'working' his land. The political machinery founded on this system of land-tenure is breaking down with changing religious beliefs and the chief's diminishing power to exact his legal dues. But from the agricultural point of view the position of the commoner remains secure, and no Bemba chief has yet profited from changing conditions to limit his subjects' right of cultivation or has tried to exact a profit from his theoretical ownership of land.

*Rights of Selection and Occupation.*

I have discussed rather fully the rights of the Bemba to occupy land as these are traditionally defined between subject and chief. What is the situation as between one commoner and another? As far as the chief is concerned a man may clear the bush anywhere in the *icalo*, if he accepts the status of a subject and membership of a village community. This fact was made clear to me when listening to a case brought before Citimukulu's court. On this occasion the headman of village A on one side of a river complained that villagers from B on the opposite bank had crossed the stream and cut gardens in the bush immediately near his village instead of cultivating on the other side. Citimukulu heard the case at some length, but gave his decision without hesitation. He declared that no action lay, and dismissed all the litigants. He said to the assembled court, 'They are all my people. It is my *icalo* and

African squatter native cannot leave a farm without permission from his owner, and in some districts the native who breaks his contract with his landlord is convicted under a penal code.

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241 Sometimes a woman works side by side with her husband, piling up branches as he cuts them from the tree. Both may move out into temporary shelters (*imitanda*) built near their gardens, and live there for some weeks together. But the branches are harder to carry when they are heavy with leaves and green sap, and the Bemba reckon that any but a woman who 'loves her husband',[1] i.e. a specially devoted or newly married wife, would prefer to wait till the boughs have dried! The important thing is to finish the work before the end of the hot weather, when the parched bush often bursts into flame, and fires sweep across the gardens before the *ifibula* have been properly stacked. If the work has been delayed into September the man hurries to help his wife, and both carry in the last branches, stacking together in haste. Laggards are sometimes reduced to making several small gardens (*akakumba*, plur. *utukumba*), instead of one or more large ones, piling the boughs where they have fallen from the trees. With the last branch [574] stacked, the family rest. The women begin to enjoy themselves, and go on a round of visits to friends. The country is covered with circular heaps of dried wood waiting through long sultry days for the firing of the bush.

241 685 [643] *Firing the gardens* (*ukuoce fibula*). The firing of the *icitemene* is an exciting and important event in the agricultural year. No one may set light to his branches until a special signal has been given by the chief, otherwise one blazing garden might set the whole bush alight and possibly destroy in a day the unstacked branches of countless gardeners. Heavy damages are claimed by a man whose *ifibula* have been burnt before they were ready. In the old days a native who set fire to the bush, whether accidentally or on purpose, had to give up his own *icitemene* in compensation, and if he had destroyed too much property to be able to make the damage good, he became the chief's slave. If the chief's own gardens were burnt, some say the culprit would have been mutilated or beaten; others that he would have been made to work for the chief. Nowadays financial compensation is asked for, and I have records of cases in which sums from 10*s*. to £3. 10*s*. were demanded as a return for what 622 is, after all, the loss of the whole prospect of harvest for the year.

241 643 The chief must give the signal for the firing of the branches as late as possible in the dry season to give the people time to finish the work, but he must not wait till the rains have fallen

[1] *Aletemwa kuli wiba.*

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and damped the dry wood. Territorial chiefs try to synchronize the burning in one neighbourhood, and I have seen a messenger go from Citimukulu's court to Nkula's village, four days' walk away, announcing the date when the Paramount's garden would be fired. Besides the performance of common ritual, this is the only occasion when the whole Bemba territory is organized as one economic unit.

The signal for the firing is the lighting of the chief's own pile with the correct rites.[1] A bush fire burning fiercely gives a red glow to the sky at night, and I have seen natives living near Nkula's capital stand on their village beds at dusk, watching the colour deepen over the horizon. They talked in excited tones, and shouted to each other in triumph, 'Look over there! He has fired his gardens now! See how red it is now! The gardens of the chief are burning now!' And so the news travels from village to village through the district. In each separate community it is the headman who first sets light to his *ifibula*. At Pambalasa, shortly after my arrival in Bemba country, I saw the sons of the headman and his married daughters file silently into his hut one evening at sun-down. After ten minutes or so they emerged, and the men of the party swung off into the bush single file, head averted, very anxious not to be noticed. The other villagers explained, with the lowered tone and glance with which they usually describe a ritual act, 'They have gone to kindle the branches at the headman's place.' I found that the family had been calling for the blessing of the ancestral spirits inside the hut, and hence had been concerned lest I should see what they were doing. Next day, however, I saw a commoner set fire to his piled-up branches. 'New fire' is needed to set light to the gardens, i.e. fire made with fire-sticks or matches bought at a store. Arrived at his garden, the owner watched the way the wind was blowing, and stood so that it blew away from him. He made a rough torch of bundled up grasses and spat into the air calling on his *imipashi* for blessing. Then he set fire to the torch with a match, and ran round the edge of the wood pile lighting the twigs here and there as he ran. The piled-up branches, dry and brittle from three or four months' exposure to sun, crackled and flamed in a moment, and the children ran wildly round and round, shouting with

[1] Cf. pp. 372–3. Signals for firing the bush are among the orders a chief is specially empowered to give under the 'Native Authorities Ordinance' of 1929.

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241 is very much liked as a food, but it does not grow well on all soils, and needs a good deal of labour to protect it from birds. Therefore it is less and less planted. Nevertheless, it is still the crop which has the greatest ritual importance, and there is something almost romantic in the natives' attitude to it. People stop at a field where it is grown and smile and say, 'How lucky the owner is to have such [643] good soil.' They describe *amasaka* districts with appreciation. It is associated with chieftainship, since Kaffir corn is necessary for much of the tribal ritual, and the greater supply of labour at the capital makes it easier to grow it. The perennial Kaffir corn (*sonkwe*) is easier to grow since it is not attacked by birds, but many Bemba do not rate its flour very highly. Both types are 241 doctored before sowing in some families (*icibyalilo*), and must 834 be protected from contact with sex. In the old days a man had 761 to purify himself after intercourse and wait three days before sowing the Kaffir corn. The crop is also considered to be injured by contact with death. 'People say: A hot person (i.e. a person who has not been ritually purified after a sex act) should not spoil the Kaffir corn; and a new death, it must not spoil it either.'[1] In the old days Kaffir-corn seeds were rubbed with a piece of dough, which had been made with water heated in the tiny marriage pot used to purify a chief mourner after the act of ritual intercourse with which he removed the taint of death from his family or village. This dough was thought to protect the seeds, as it contained elements of heat from contact with sex, and of cold from contact with death, and hence inoculated the crops against both dangers. 241 Many of these beliefs are dying now, but the tribal sacrifices of the Bemba still coincide with its first-fruit ceremony (cf. pp. 374–8); flour is used to scatter over the dead body of a chief, and his corpse cannot be buried until the cycle of the Kaffir-corn harvest is at an end. The flour is used to fill the sacred basket in the chief's relic [881] hut. At one point in the girl's initiation ceremonies she lays her head on *amasaka* seeds. For all these reasons, the Bemba grow Kaffir corn whenever they can, and Citimukulu plants it definitely for ceremonial purposes. He went out himself with his sons to reap it during my visit and called me specially to watch the process. He kept saying it was 'good' (*cawama*) for a chief to grow Kaffir corn.

Two other old crops of the Bemba are handled ritually, but are

[1] *Buleti bukabe teti buonaule masaka: ne mfwa mbishi tekuti ionaule masaka.*

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FQ5 Bemba FQ5



224 411 [435 23] (*d*) *Spears, bows, dogs, and guns.* The Bemba occasionally hunt in twos and threes with spears and dogs. Trained dogs are very valuable—about 10*s*.—and hard to buy. I never saw hunters go out with dogs, but I know that they are extremely skilful in throwing spears at a distance of about twenty feet, and that they sometimes kill small duiker in this manner. Bows and arrows are carried by very old men only and used to shoot at monkeys raiding gardens. [428] A bow is handed down ceremoniously to a dead man's heir but is not often used in the hunt. It is the ambition of every native to own a muzzle-loading gun, which he can purchase for about 30*s*. and obtain a Government licence to use. Many Bemba still go to the mines for no other purpose than to earn the money for a gun, which seems to promise security and prestige in their old age. However, many of these guns are in fact more deadly to the hunter than to the quarry, since they are rammed with shot, slag iron, and rusty nails till the long-suffering barrels explode. It is unlikely that many buck are killed in this way.

[177 643] European rifles are owned only by hunters employed by Europeans, or chiefs. The Bemba are said to be skilled trackers and think nothing of spending two or three days in pursuit of game. Game which is killed with a gun is the property of the shooter, to divide as he pleases, after he has given a portion to the nearest headman or chief. There is no special ritual attached to shooting, although the hunter may ask a blessing from the headman if he wishes, and in any case calls on his *imipashi* and carries magic charms.

224 463 (*e*) *Elephant hunters.* The Bemba elephant hunters were typical magician-specialists (*ifibinda*), i.e. they possessed both skill and the magic necessary to give them success. Elephants were killed formerly by the aid of weighted spears of specially heavy make by hunters known as *bashimunini*, with dogs and spears and large crowds of beaters by another type of hunter known as *bakalongwe*, or with guns traded from the Arabs by those called *Bafundi*. Nowadays elephant hunters only work for the Government or for certain big chiefs with special permission. The ordinary native is allowed to kill an elephant only when it is actually raiding his garden.

[422] All elephant hunters were under the direct control of the chief in the old days, and he had the monopoly of the ivory so obtained. The chief summoned the hunters, but they were led by the *icibinda*.

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considerable. Even the most stupid or beer-sodden rulers seemed to discuss such matters with authority. The chief always selects his own site for tree-cutting in my experience. I have seen Citimukulu and Lucembe advise women as to whether their millet was ripe enough to reap, and Nkula upbraiding some of his people on two occasions, once for making village beds on unsuitable soil, and at another time for not fencing properly. He turned to me with a look as despairing as that of any white educator, and said: 'Look at them! They are working anyhow (*cibombebombe*). Is not that what hunger does?' [1]

Of their *icalo* as a whole the chiefs also know a great deal. The messengers who go about from village to village to fetch tribute labourers, or the headmen who come on business to the capital, report on conditions. I was amazed in fact to find how much of the conversation in a chief's hut concerned the whole organization of the food-supply, the exact type of soil in such and such a place, or the methods successfully used on it. Comments and criticisms are passed freely. The chief also knows when and where the rivers are in flood, and, in an incredibly short time, how many buck any travelling European has hit or missed. Thus his position at the capital, a place where people constantly come and go, his specialized knowledge of agriculture, and his personal interest in food-production, the latter at present correlated with the whole tribute system, gives the Bemba ruler opportunity to lead and influence the agricultural activities of the whole tribe. This fact may well acquire administrative importance if any new improved system of cultivation is ever discovered for this area.

In his own gardens the chief organizes the biggest labour force that exists in the country. To clear the bush on a large scale (*ukutema pakalamba*) means making a number of gardens in the case of a leading chief.[2] When cutting on a large scale, many gardens are made. For instance, in 1933 Citimukulu made gardens as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Personal *mulasa* gardens: (1 big and 1 medium) | = 3·2 acres (approx.) | |
| Gardens for 16 wives: (11 medium and 35 small) | = 8·5 | " " |
| Gardens for 4 'brides of the relics': (3 medium and 3 small) | = 2·8 | " " |
| Help over gardens for 4 courtiers, 1 blind singer, 2 widowed sisters: (gardens unmeasured)[3] | = 3·5 | " " |
| | 18 | " " |

[1] *Moneni apa! Balebomba cibombebombe. Te nsala?*
[2] This does not happen every year (cf. p. 215).
[3] These gardens were roughly paced round the edges. A big garden means

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241 461 643 622

In 1932 Makassa made one big personal garden of about two and a half acres and medium gardens for five wives, two inherited widows from his predecessor, one widowed sister, and one deserted daughter. The amount of labour required during a nine-months' period for all the garden work of the Citimukulu plus the building of a new village has been given as 561 men and 329 women.[1] Mukuikile—a smaller chief—required 275 men-days for the cutting of his gardens, and 210 women-days for piling the branches.

In general, the *umulasa* labourers are supervised by the chief himself or one of his head officials, and the organization of this irregular labour force is one of the most important tasks he has to undertake, since on it his tribal supply of food depends.

Even though the *umulasa* labourers only work for the inside of a week, there are often as many as twenty or thirty men or women in the gardening team, drawn from different villages all over the *icalo*, so that the chief has not only the power to organize his own garden work but definite possibilities of instruction.

*Work and Time Sequence.*

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From the main calendar of seasonal activities shown above, it will be seen that the season for tree-cutting, the hardest work of the men, is the cold time of the year, but this lopping of the branches can really be done at any time during the months from April until September when the forest fires which break out in hot weather might threaten to destroy the piled wood. The beginning of tree-cutting usually necessitates the movement of the whole family out into the bush, and thus makes a real break in the rhythm of daily life. During these cold weather months there are few other important food-producing activities for the men. For those who live on rivers, fishing on the flats begins in April and low-water fishing in July. The best months for net-hunting are hot weather at the end of this period. Basket-making and thatching must be done while the grass and reeds are still tall enough,

one more or less round, about 400 paces round; a medium one about 200 paces; a small one only 40 or so. Their area may therefore be calculated as follows:

'Big' gardens—2½ acres approx.
'Medium' gardens—7/10ths of an acre approx.
'Small' gardens—1/40th of an acre approx.

N.B. 4–10 acres of forest is needed according to the growth of trees and type of forest for one acre of garden. These approximations were made for me by Mrs. Gore-Browne.

[1] Cf. p. 258.

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## TABLE D

### *Notes on the Structure of the Bemba Village*

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I. *Table showing the length of life of the Bemba villages of three big chiefs' territories*, 1934.

Citimukulu's territory (Lubemba): 160 villages.
Mwamba's territory (Ituna): 69 villages.
Nkula's territory (Icinga): 76 villages.

| | *Citimukulu* | *Mwamba* | *Nkula* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % |
| New villages (i.e. headmen appointed in reign of present chief) | 29 | 49 | 42 |
| Villages with 1 previous holder of headmanship | 16 | 26 | 9 |
| Villages with 2 previous holders of headmanship | 10 | 14 | 18 |
| Village with 3 previous holders of headmanship | 40 | 10 | 13 |
| Villages formed by remnants of 2 or more old villages. | 6 | .. | 15 |

It will be noted that the proportion of new headmanships created by each chief in his own reign is just under half the total titles in the case of the territorial chiefs, about 30 per cent. in the case of the Paramount chief.

The striking difference between the number of old titles to headmanships in Citimukulu's territory and those of the other two chiefs, i.e. 40 per cent. as against 10 and 13 per cent. respectively, is due to the concentration of the hereditary councillors of the tribe (*bakabilo*) who must inevitably be headmen for social, political, and ritual reasons, in Citimukulu's district.

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624
643

II. *Table showing the proportion of commoner headmen to those of royal blood*, and hence the political powers of the chief.

| | *Citimukulu* | *Mwamba* | *Nkula* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Number of commoner headmen | 49 | 42 | 42 |
| Number of hereditary councillors or priests, acting as headmen | 30 | 6 | 17 |
| Number of descendants of wives of early chiefs acting as headmen | 3 | .. | .. |
| Number of chief's relatives acting as headmen | 19 | 41 | 33 |
| Number of headmen from other tribes | .. | 10 | 10 |

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It will be noted that the number of commoners given positions of authority is under half the total number in each territory. The far greater number of chief's relatives holding office in Mwamba's country is due to the number of surviving descendants of the previous Mwamba (Mubanga Cipoya) an extremely powerful ruler, who put his relatives in charge of villages all over the country.

(*a*) In the case of Citimukulu, the chief's relatives consisted of: Brother of the chief, 1; sisters, mothers, or maternal nieces of the chief (*banamfumu*), 7; sons of the chief (*bana ba mfumu*), 10 (9 men and 1 woman); grandchildren of the chief (*beshikulu ba mfumu*), 9 (8 men and 1 woman); relatives in law (*bukwe*), 3 (2 men and 1 woman).

(*b*) In the case of Mwamba, the chief's relatives consisted of: 1 brother, 1 sister; 11 ranked as 'children of the chief', 3 of the present Mwamba, 3 descendants of sons of the past Mwamba, and 5 of the penultimate Mwamba (5 women and 6 men in all); 7 were grandchildren, 4 descendants of other royal lines; and 3 descendants of the wives of former Citimukulus.

(*c*) In the case of Nkula, the chief's relatives consisted of: 1 brother and 2 sisters, 5 'children of the chief', 4 grandchildren (1 woman), and 4 relatives in law, and 9 descendants of other royal lines.

III. *Details showing kinship composition of typical villages.*

(Only adult members of the village are noted. Such terms as brother, sister, grandchild are used to indicate own brother and sister as well as the classificatory extension of these terms.)

(*a*) A village composed of the headman's own *ulupwa* (the bilateral group composed of near relatives of both sides of the family, plus affinal kinsmen).

e.g. *Cikutwe*, a young *mukabilo* of Citimukulu's territory (1934).

*Relatives of the present headman, including matrilineal group*: 1 mother, 4 mother's brothers and wives, 2 sisters and husbands, 2 maternal nieces (deserted), 2 daughters (one married), and 3 grandchildren (1 male and 2 female) with their spouses.

*Others*: 2 married brothers temporarily resident; and 2 deserted wives, relatives of the headman's wife.

*Relatives of the past headman:*

Remains of *matrilineal group*: 1 maternal niece (widowed), 3 grandsons (married), 2 granddaughters (married).

Remains of *matrilocal group*: 2 married daughters and husbands, and 1 son (married) temporarily resident.

(It will be noted that Bemba make a difference between the kinsmen of the present and past headman. Both groups are really kin to the

622 territories generally in the capacity of sub-chiefs. Subject chiefs of alien stock, generally of Bisa origin, also hold some chieftainships particularly in the west.

Cases of disputed succession were decided by a meeting composed of members of the royal family and the *bakabilo* or hereditary councillors. Disputed successions and feuds between one chief and another were common in the old days.

642 The succession to Bisa chieftainships also goes from brother to brother
622 and then to sister's son or sister's daughter's son, but the Bisa never
184 reached the same degree of centralisation; they live in more scattered groups and, before the arrival of the Europeans, had no Paramount Chief. Little is known of the political structure of the Aushi and the Unga, but they have certainly not achieved a centralised government, and some of the smaller Aushi chiefs are living on tiny islands in the Bangweulu swamps.

THE MACHINERY OF CENTRALIZATION

642 The Bemba can be reckoned as a more or less centralized State in that
●643 its major chiefdoms are controlled by members of one royal family; its Paramount Chief had the command of the army and has the supreme control of supernatural power, the possession of the most sacred of the tribal relics and the right of appointment to lesser chiefdoms. He also provides the final judicial court of appeal.

643 The Paramount Chief and some of the biggest territorial chiefs have
645 attached to them a group of hereditary officials who combine ritual with political and judicial functions. In the case of the Paramount Chief these officials, the *bakabilo*, number between 35 and 40 and form an advisory council on special matters of state. They include the hereditary officials in charge of the chief's relics (*babeny*), the royal buriers and embalmers (*bafingo*) and a number of other officials carrying out special ritual functions in connection with the ceremonial of kingship. These *bakabilo* are in a very powerful position. They are hereditary heads of villages near the capital; they are immune from giving tribute to the chief; they used to wear special head-dresses; they must keep the same sex-taboos as the chief, and are buried in the central district under his control. The real *bakabilo* are those connected with the Paramount's court. They are in fact called "the *Babemba*". The *bakabilo* of the *citimukulu* bury all the major chiefs and they act as regents at the death of the Paramount; any matter of tribal importance, such as a succession dispute, is placed before them. They check the power of the Paramount, since they can, and sometimes do, refuse to perform the ritual on which he depends for the exercise of his power. Being hereditary officials with lines of descent as old as that of the Paramount Chief himself they cannot be removed at will. They form a central tribal council but not a public assembly such as the *pitso* of the Sotho-speaking peoples.

622 Each chief has certain executive officials to support him. These in-
624 clude the *bafilolo* or heads of the divisions of a capital, who maintain peace in the royal village, organise tribute labour and allocate land for cultivation. They are appointed from among the chief's own favourites and supporters. Each big chief had formerly a number of captains or *bashika* of whom some were hereditary and most were Appointed at the chief's will.

643 nothing like the year long burial rites of the *Citiaukulu* exist in these areas.

881 (3) *Girls' Initiation Ceremony.* As has been mentioned, the initiation of boys is not here practised, but there is a form of girls' puberty ritual (*cisungu*) which is, in essence, a nubility rite. Formerly it lasted from two to three months, although the ceremony witnessed by Richards in 1934 was completed in six weeks. It consists in the seclusion of the girls during a series of mimetic rites representing their duties as cook, gardener, hostess and mother, which are carried out in the initiation hut and also in the surrounding bush. The girl is also given a series of some 40 to 50 pottery images (*mbusa*), which are associated with special songs and refer to aspects of the legal obligations of marriage. The girl is presented with these pottery images on the last night of the ceremony, after having jumped over a hoop made of crossed branches. The ceremony directly precedes marriage and is, in fact, a part of the marriage ceremonial. The bridegroom plays a part on the last night of the initiation ceremony when he shoots an arrow at a spot on the wall of the initiation hut. The formal consummation of the marriage takes place next day. *Cisungu* ceremonies of a similar kind are mentioned as existing among the Bisa, but have not yet been described.

introducer of *Butwa* throughout these parts, and his name is famous in many a *Butwa* song."(1) Membership was open to all, irrespective of age and sex. The Ant-hill clan was particularly closely associated with the society. Refusal to join on the part of either of the spouses was a valid cause of divorce. A higher grade of elders (*mangula*) in the society was constituted by members of both sexes who wore a special dress, bore special names and claimed to possess supernatural powers. Sessions were held annually or at longer intervals. The candidates, who had to pay an initiation fee, were given the *chibolo* concoction to drink and were paraded under an arch of bent saplings before entering the temple where sexual intercourse took place. Later they were given fetish-horns by the elders of the society. Painted in stripes and smeared with white chalk they participated in the all-night dancing (imitative of the movements of the crested crane), the beer-drinking, and the festivities which followed. A good deal of sexual licence was allowed within the precincts of the temple. Members were bound to assist one another in sickness and need and were forbidden, under penalty of death, to divulge the society's secrets. *Butwa* performed fertility rites; it wielded considerable political power, so that the chiefs had to treat it with respect. It was feared by outsiders who charged it with terrorism and robbery. Special funerary ceremonies were performed at the death of members. Members of *Butwa* used an esoteric language, *Bubendo*; this was an argot formed by transposing syllables, changing initial letters and introducing obsolete words and compound metaphorical expressions. *Butwa* songs were sung by women members to the accompaniment of *chansa*, a musical instrument resembling the guitar. Apparently still flourishing in the first decade of the twentieth century, the society is said to have since died away.(2)

*Blood-Brotherhood*

Blood-brotherhood pacts were contracted between the natives and the Arab traders.(3) A marriage with a native girl, presumably a maternal relative of the blood-brother, was a usual concomitant of the ceremony.

*Guilds*

Occupational guilds were known in the Chishinga(4) and Aushi country where iron-ore smelting and iron-working were hereditary crafts surrounded by a wealth of ritual. It is likely that they also functioned in the Luapula valley while the industry was alive, though no mention of this occurs in the available sources.

## POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The Kazembe was formerly an absolute overlord, subordinate in name only to Muata Yamvo to whom he continued to send annual tribute.(5) Lukwesa Mpanga did not send any for three years. When several of his subjects were killed or savaged by wild animals this was interpreted as a punishment for his neglect. He made amends by sending a convoy with slaves, salt and copper.(6)

(1) Campbell, op.cit.
(2) Brelsford, 1, 1946, p.14.
(3) Livingstone, II, p.258.
(4) Brelsford, 3, 1949.
(5) Valdez, II, p.174.
(6) Pogge, 1880.

631 The kingdom of Kazembe extended from the Lualaba to the Bemba country and from the Aushi paramount chiefdom of Mereere to the Talwa chiefdom of Nsama. The districts at a distance from the capital were governed and
636 defended by resident *bakalasa* (watchmen) appointed by and answerable to the Kazembe. Outlying dependencies, *anayanga* (sing. *yanga*), were con-
701 trolled by Kazembe's agents who travelled with their *nabumba* (retinues) to collect the tribute. There was no standing army.(1) In time of general war the governor of the frontier district, Moenepanda,(2) commanded the troops raised by provincial chiefs.

361 The earlier capital, on the eastern side of Lake Mofwe, had to be moved to a new site at the death of a Kazembe.(3) It was surrounded by a
643 deep ditch(4) and enclosed with a wall of reeds. Its gateway was decor-
644 ated with dozens of human skulls.(5) On returning to his country after the Yeke raids had been beaten off, Kazembe moved the capital farther south to Mwansabombwe where it has remained. The Kazembe had a large corps of palace officials, many of whom were his *bacanuna* (fellow-clansmen of his mother), and a bodyguard.(6) Fumo Anceva,(7) the Kazembe's chamberlain, superintended the management of the palace, escorted foreigners and arranged audiences. There were five classes or ranks of Lunda: Kazembe and his family; the descendants of the Lunda chiefs from Muata Yamvo's country; those of the Luba chiefs from the Lualaba invested by Muata Yamvo; those of the clan heads who came with the first Lunda expedition; and those descended from the indigenous Shila chiefs and headmen admitted to Lunda-hood. Only sons of a Kazembe by a Lunda woman of the second or third rank were eligible for the position of Kazembe.(8) A reigning Kazembe usually recognised his successor officially.(9) The badge of office, the *lukano* armband, had to be transferred from the arm of the dead Kazembe to that of his successor.(10) A *mutaba*-tree leaf was inserted in his mouth during the enthronement ceremony.

643 Kazembe and his household lived in the *mosumba*, the royal enclosure.(11)
644 His first four wives were given traditional names: Moari, Intemena, Kasaleuca, Fuama.(12) The families (? lineages) of women who had borne a Kazembe formed a nobility. Their members were the *bacalulua*.

624 Village headmen are nowadays administrative and ritual officials. They transmit the decisions of the Native Authority; they act as mediators in disputes, and endeavour to settle them amicably without the parties going to court; they organise work-parties to clear channels and repair village fences; they tend the village medicine (*nshipa*), ritually purify lion-killers, and take ritual measures to end a drought. Formerly they officiated at the sowing and first-fruits ceremonies. They are appointed by the Kazembe from among the members of their predecessor's *cikota*.
622 District chiefs hear cases in the first instance. An appeal from their decisions can be made to Kazembe, who is head of the Native Authority. The chiefs have succeeded the tax-collectors who were established under the British

(1) Valdez, II, p.238.
(2) Gamitto, I, p.246; II, p.18; Burton, p 110.
(3) Livingstone, I, pp.247, 264; Burton, p.139.
(4) Burton, p.43.
(5) Livingstone, I, p.247.
(6) Valdez, II, p.238.
(7) Burton, pp.101, 108.
(8) Gamitto, II, p.17.
(9) Valdez, II, p.232.
(10) Gamitto, II, pp.35-6.
(11) Valdez, II, p.214.
(12) ibid., p.254.

643 At state functions the Kazembe appeared sitting on a stool placed upon
292 lion-skins. He was shaded by a canopy of umbrellas made of coarse native
293 cotton fabric(1) and wore an elaborate head-dress of scarlet and yellow
534 feathers, the *muconzo* cloth adorned with bead and cowrie ornaments, the
535 *insipo* girdle of hide,(2) and the *lukano* armband, emblem of his office.(3)
His notables and musicians sat nearby. Ceremonial dancing was performed
to the accompaniment of music.(4) Musical instruments(5) were *marimba*(6)
(a sort of xylophone), *chincufo*(7) (a basso drum), *imbirebire* (big conical
drum with cowhide or an elephant's ear stretched over the open end), *gomati*
(two pieces of iron connected by a curved rod). The *ngondo*,(8) a hollow
wooden cylinder beated with drumsticks, was used to convey messages by means
of varying combinations of beats. The big sacred *chambancua* drum,(9) rest-
ing on a lion's skin in Kazembe's palace, was only brought out in wartime to
accompany the armies.

521 Clan and tribal history and family genealogies are favourite subjects
526 of discussion at beer-drinking parties. District and village rivalry now
finds expression in football matches.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH

842 The male alone was thought to be instrumental in begetting children.
847 Babies who cut their upper teeth first were destroyed as bearers of bad
551 luck.(9) An infant is usually given the name of one of its dead ancestors
on either the paternal or maternal side; this gives some indication of an-
cestry. Chinyanta, Lukwesa, Ilunga, Muonga, are characteristic Lunda
names.

582 The effective exogamous unit is the *cikota*. Preferential marriage is
with the *mufyala*, a person whose father is a fellow-clansman of one's mother
or conversely, and particularly with father's sister's daughter. A network
of affinal relationships thus develops between villages. In general there
are no definite preferences leading to marriages between certain clans, but
583 traditional reputations attaching to clans may cause their members to be
591 regarded as desirable or undesirable marriage partners. Marriage payments
are low. Both matrilocal and patrilocal marriages occur, but for the first
few years marriage is usually matrilocal so that the husband can "get
accustomed". He puts up a temporary hut in the *citente* of his parents-in-
law and becomes a member of their extended family. Later the couple are at
liberty to move. Often the parents of both spouses live in the same
595 village. Lunda marriages tend to be patrilocal. Polygyny is not frequent.
The second wife is usually inherited, e.g. she may be one's elder brother's
widow. A man may marry a younger sister of his wife but not an elder sis-
ter, since she is called *mayofyala*, "mother-in-law".

764 The dead are buried in the bush. A *mvali* (see p.86 above) of the de-
ceased takes part in the ceremony. To divert the thoughts of the partici-

(1) Burton, p.254.
(2) Valdez, II, pp.217-8; cf. Livingstone, I, pp.262-3; Burton, p.42; Bowdich, p.91
(3) Burton, p.253. (4) Valdez, II, p.227; Burton, p.114.
(5) Valdez, op.cit., pp.222-4; Livingstone, I, p.305.
(6) Burton, p.112; Valdez, op.cit., p.255.
(7) Livingstone, I, p.343. (8) ibid., pp.342-3.
(9) ibid., pp.331-2. (10) Livingstone, I, p.276.

pants from the contemplation of their loss he makes jokes at the expense of the dead man and behaves in a fashion which in other circumstances would be considered outrageous and would not be tolerated.

Kazembes considered themselves as potentially immortal; thus the death of a Kazembe was attributed to neglect of magical precautions against witchcraft.(1) According to Pinto, slaves and wives of a dead Kazembe were sacrificed and a ten-day period of authorized licence followed during which robberies were allowed.(2)

It was believed that the living and the dead could communicate. Life after death resembled that led while alive.(3)

## RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS AND RITUAL

The concept of the high-god Lesa is common to the Bemba-speaking peoples. *Lesa*, the creator, is regarded rather as a nature force than a personal deity and is not the object of an organised cult. He manifests himself in thunder, lightning, and the rainbow and can kill by lightning or epidemics, but generally interferes little.

The *ngulu*, nature spirits residing in animals, trees, stones, hills, caves, ponds, waterfalls, can bring good weather and crops and are prayed to in an emergency. This cult is of non-Lunda origin and has probably come from the Chishinga, Lungu and Bemba country. Most of the dwelling-places of these spirits are found on the escarpment hills and on the plateau. The *afumu ya mipashi* (chiefs of spirits), which can enter and possess people making them dance, are local deities whose beneficient activity is confined to the village or district.

When the general well-being of the community was concerned the spirits of dead Kazembes, *masamos*, were consulted and presented with offerings of cassava, beer and goats. Kazembes were buried at a place north-east of the old capital with which it was connected by a broad pathway(4) still discernible. Each had a shrine which was tended by a guardian-priest, *mwine masamo*,(5) whose office was hereditary. These keepers of the royal graves sought the advice of the oracle when war was contemplated and invoked the assistance of the spirits.(6) The River Lualaba, in which Kazembe the founder of the dynasty rests, was held in veneration. Processions went there annually at harvesting time. It is said that Keleka was the first Kazembe who failed to lead the procession in person, and the famine and smallpox epidemic which later occurred were attributed to his negligence.(7) The Kazembe is said to have been the highest religious authority.(8)

Carved wooden figures representing dead ancestors (*nkisi*) were kept in special huts and received offerings of beer, cassava, flour, hemp and tobacco.(9) Kazembe had several such figures, some named after dead chiefs, which were carried before the army in battle.(10)

(1) Valdez, II, p.242.
(2) Burton, p.128.
(3) Valdez, op.cit., p.243.
(4) Valdez, II, p.231.
(5) Burton, p.103.
(6) Valdez, op.cit., p.248.
(7) Valdez, II, p.257.
(8) ibid., p.243.
(9) Livingstone, I, p.353.
(10) ibid.

791 778 The ng'anga (magicians) of whose activity little is known, dwelt in a banana grove just south of the capital which no outsiders could enter on pain of death.(1)

782 789 787 [724] Human sacrifices were made at the capital.(2) Victims were prisoners of war and, failing them, the Kazembe's own subjects. Human blood, hearts and entrails are mentioned among the ingredients of which medicines were made.(3) Horns containing medicine were supposed to give protection from witchcraft. Before any hazardous enterprise - war, hunting, travel - was undertaken, an oracle was consulted(4) and, if prospects looked auspicious, a medicine was prepared.(5)

264 643 787 The Kazembe was said to receive warnings of hostile machinations in dreams. If he dreamt of someone more than once this was a sign that the man was plotting against him and must be put to death.(6) Crawford was informed that the Kazembe was ritually insulted during his meals, and he describes this in some detail.(7) "The king eats in a mysterious mode called *kapoolo*... The 'old doctors' cursed him while he ate, his face veiled: 'Kazembe should die! He is no man! A beast! Kill the beast, oh! son of Temena (his mother's name)' ". The *mondo* was sounded to let people know that Kazembe was having his meal, and no one else was allowed to eat at the same time.

834 783 Ritual cleansing is prescribed after sexual intercourse. A man who kills a lion has to be washed in *nshipa* medicine by the headman before he can enter the village, and may not eat or speak till this has been done.

226 789 [784] [834] A wealth of ritual attached to fishing. Ritual authority was vested in the Shila "owners of the land".(8) The ceremony of *ukufungule sabi* (unlocking the fish) was performed annually towards the middle of the dry season on all the waters except the Luapula which "belongs to God". Bits of medicine were attached to the nets in order to ensure a good catch and prevent the nets from being torn. Charms were worn by fishermen or suspended at the bows to protect the canoe from being capsized by hippo or crocodiles. When the canoe was first launched the women sprinkled it with a little cassava flour to ensure plentiful catches. A women, particularly when carrying a child, was forbidden to step over a net. Sexual relations were tabooed when the fish were being poisoned. Lake Mweru was apparently never crossed south of Kilwa island, according to Livingstone.(9) At the "cursing" ceremony on Lake Mweru the dead men drowned in the lake were called by name and reprimanded.(10) Those who came safe ashore after their boats had foundered were greeted with a deliverance song and led in a thanksgiving procession.(11)

(1) Gamitto, I, p.358.
(2) Pereira puts the number of human victims at twenty a day (Livingstone, I, p.265). This is probably no more trustworthy than is his statement that Kazembe's army numbered 20,000 trained soldiers. R.J. Moore discusses human sacrifices as if at the time he wrote (1937) they were still common and an essential part of the salt-making ritual. The victim, according to him, is "nowadays usually a child".
(3) Burton, p.126.
(4) ibid., p.228.
(5) ibid., p.128.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.277.
(7) Crawford, 2, p.104.
(8) Livingstone, op.cit., p.252.
(9) op.cit., p.269.
(10) Crawford, op.cit., p.105.
(11) ibid., pp.105-6.

# Preface.

Since I completed this paper Chitimukulu Kanyanta has died, in August, 1943. At least a year will pass after the death before a successor begins to inherit, and, as Mwamba too has been dangerously ill for some time, it is likely that there will be great changes of personnel throughout the main lines of Bemba chieftainships within the next year or so. The inheritance of a big chieftainship sometimes takes as long as two years. This gives ample time for the resolving of any personal or tribal disputes and some are sure to occur. The claims of the third branch of the clan will, on this occasion, cause some debate.

The fact that Kanyanta has died does not affect the discussions in this paper. For it is the principles and the precedents of succession that I have tried to emphasise, and the usefulness of this work will extend, I hope, far beyond the deaths of existing chiefs. Much has been written about the Bemba but no full and thorough study of the succession of chiefs has yet been published. But the tribe is the largest in Northern Rhodesia and the typical movement of chiefs from one district to another on succession is a factor that affects the work of officials of many departments. So that though the subject may make dull reading its importance to Government justifies a detailed study.

It is necessary to say something of the attached genealogical table. The table compiled by the late E. H. B. Goodall was prepared in 1910–12. It is a thorough piece of work but it is eleven feet long and thus unsuitable for reproduction in this paper. A smaller edition was prepared during the Willis enquiry in 1924. The table I give here is adapted from this latter one with amendments to bring it up to date. It deals only with the present lineage. District Note Books and works by Missionaries contain many long lists of Chitimukulus but no one list agrees with another about the number of Paramounts that have reigned since the dim past. Since this is a modern discussion and not a historical study the restriction of the table to the verified and known chiefs of the present lineage is adequate. The Paramount just deceased was thus Chitimukulu VIII of the present lineage, though some writers would make him the thirty-second of present and traditional history.

The letter and figure following each proper name in this paper are given for ease of reference to the corresponding line and place in the genealogical table.

I am most grateful for the help and comments of Father Etienne of the White Fathers Missions. He is an expert of many years standing on the Bemba and his assistance has been invaluable to me in clarifying the principles of succession.

I must also thank Dr. Max Gluckman, the Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for important criticisms and suggestions on the earlier draft of this paper.

W. V. Brelsford,
*District Officer.*

Luwingu,
March, 1944.

643 644 551 Another point to emphasise in connection with these two traditional names of Chandamukulu and Mukukamfumu is that there is no change or advance from one name to the other as with chiefs, for, strictly speaking, all royal houses are equal and it is only possible to state that precedence is by seniority. A Mukukamfumu never becomes a Chandamukulu for the simple reason that one name is as good as the other. The sons of a senior Mukukamfumu are nearer to the Paramountcy than those of a junior Chandamukulu. But whether the sons of this senior Mukukamfumu ever do get the Paramountcy depends merely upon whether the sons of a still more senior *namfumu* outlive hers. We hear of the big house (*ng'anda ikalamba*) and the little house (*ng'anda inono*). The house of Chandamukulu is the big house at the moment because she is the senior daughter of a senior *namfumu*. But deaths could change this in the future and turn the Mukukamfumu's into the big house, for once the name is inherited it is not changed. Chandamukulu and Mukukamfumu are but names and the relative seniority of their mothers decides which is senior at any particular moment.

### (i) History.

173 551 644 A brief history of the *namfumu* will bring out many points of succession. Little can be gathered about the earlier lineage. The name Chandamukulu is said to be the oldest name and traditionally the name of the mother of the earliest Chitimukulu', but Mukukamfumu does not make its appearance until the beginning of the present lineage. When Chileshye Chepela A2 chased away Chimbola and his family it is noteworthy that the name of Chileshye A2's mother was not changed. Dr. Richards (*op. cit.* (1), page 93) says that the mother of a Paramount succeeds to the fixed name of Chandamukulu. But there is no historical example either in the present lineage or in the old to warrant this statement.

So Mukukamfumu I kept her name when her son became Paramount. The Chandamukulu who was driven away also kept her own name until she died. Then, but not until Chimbola's mother died, did Chileshye A2's elder sister A1 take the name and title of Chandamukulu I in the new lineage. The Chimbola branch of the clan were eventually invited back from beyond the Chambeshi whither they had been driven and given an area on the Weyaya stream. The mother of Chimbolas was given the title of Chanda Weyaya but she must not take this title until she is past child bearing age. She then becomes a *Na babenye* (a mother of the hereditary relics). This arrangement seems to be a very subtle way of preventing Chanda Weyaya from re-claiming the Paramountcy for her sons, because she does not get an hereditary royal title until she cannot produce any more sons. The succession is as with other *namfumu*, from sister to sister then to grand-daughters, but if the heir is still young she does not get the name nor the sacred relics (*babenye*) until she is past child bearing age. The name just " rests " for a period.

644 173 Kanyanta Bwalya A4 died before Chandamukulu I A1 so the descent went direct and correctly to Kangwa Chonya C4 who became Chandamukulu II.

The Mukukamfumu was also inherited correctly by the granddaughter of Mukukamfumu I. Kanyanta Bwalya A4 would not inherit Mukukamfumu as, even if she was alive at the time, there was a granddaughter available. So Kasonde B2 became Mukukamfumu II. Then comes an apparent slip but one that is easily explained. Kasonde Mukukamfumu II

1 [For identification of the Chitimukulu see pp. 44-50. - ANALYST]

Dr. Gluckman pointed out to me that what has been taking place in the Bemba chiefly structure is a feature not only of Bemba history but also of many other African systems. This is a tendency to dichotomy and political struggle for the big posts between the various branches of the clan. The junior branches tend to drift and separate from the main branch and then they have to fight to get back to gain the main chieftainships. The struggles are related to the territorial divisions and the fights and intrigues between the powerful heads of such areas have, in practice, the effect of periodically re-uniting the nation. For, after each civil war, the big posts leading to the Paramountcy are again in a single branch of the family. The Paramount himself takes over the Lubemba area and the tribe is united again until a new drift away of junior branches to become territorial powers recommences. This is not the place for anthropological theorising so I refer these characteristics to the genealogical table[1]. We now have three branches of the clan. The second branch, that of the Mukukamfumu has steadily moved farther away from the Chandamukulu line, but it has succeeded in taking one big chieftainship the Nkula, and perhaps a second, the Chikwanda. Hence the tendency, mentioned by Dr. Richards, for certain chieftainships to become stabilised in definite families, is partially true. (*Op. cit.* (1), page 103.) Unless the junior branch fights, as the Mukukamfumu one is doing, it would eventually move still farther away from the senior branch and find itself left with just its present chieftainships and no hope of getting to the Paramountcy. Any third branch of the clan, as the present Mushimba branch, would also find itself drifting still farther into a little separate line of succession. This has happened to third lines in the earlier and present lineage. (See Section 3.)

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In the past this drifting away of a junior branch has often been stopped by wars and fights in which the junior branch brought itself into the Paramountcy line again. The Chimbola incident is one I have described. But these wars cannot occur in the future and the Bemba chiefly system is at a delicate stage. The old councillor who said that this would have been a fighting period was right. The Mukukamfumu branch has been satisfied, more or less, with the Nkula chieftainship since 1924 and the Chandamukulu branch still to-day says it is willing for the Mukukamfumu branch to follow on after it even to the Paramountcy. There is not much hope of this as I show later. The fact that there are two queen mothers with hereditary names is still a guiding line to succession and I am inclined to think that no son of a Chandamukulu or a Mukukamfumu would be considered as being " too far away " to come into the direct line—at the moment. The Chandamukulu succession must keep switching back to the extreme left, but, if the Chandamukulu has many sisters, daughters, and nieces, as in the present lines D and E, the Mukukamfumu must be pushed farther away to the right. And so her sons will be farther away from the Paramountcy. In time even a descendant of a Mukukamfumu would be " too far away."

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That explanation is of future complications and most of us can see the difficulties in allowing the line to go on indefinitely to the right. To deal with present day succession. Is one stop at least to be made after Chikwanda D15, the last son of a Mukukamfumu ?

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I will continue to refer to Mushimba C11 as the third sister because, as I have explained, her name has now been made into an hereditary one and I have classed, for convenience and because C4's family is at a dead end, the offspring of the two Chandamukulus C4 and C5 as one family. [55]

[1] [See cat. 116, pp. 44-50 — Analyst]

613 At the moment, if we continue the line D we find, of the same generation as the reigning chiefs, the sons of the third sister Mushimba C11. She
643 has two sons, Chief Shimumbi IV D18 and Musungu Kafyama D20. If
644 the line is carried right across, these two men are numbers seven and eight from the Paramountcy. In 1942 Kafyama D20 tried to claim the vacant Mpepo on the grounds that the line should be followed right across. But, after discussion with Government, the Superior Native Authority disallowed his claim, not because the Authority had considered the principle but because in any case Mutale Nshika D10 was the right heir for he was the son of the eldest sister. But with the first death of any of the existing chiefs in the Paramountcy line the principle of succession will have to be decided, for there are no more sons of this generation from the elder sisters. This is the problem. Should the third branch and its offspring be considered at all as claimants for chieftainships leading to the Paramountcy? The fact that such people are of the royal totem does entitle them to chieftainships when available, but does it entitle them to those in the main line and can the sons of any royal sister claim this right?

The third branch of the family naturally asserts that it has this right. But it would be hazardous to state that tribal opinion, or the rule of the hereditary councillors, would support it, for an actual issue has never before been placed before them. The Nkula of a second branch, claimed that the descent was changed to a vertical one in its favour by the long run of Paramountcies from the right of the table. This is a belief based on an axiom that is often quoted in tribal arguments, the axiom that history makes the custom. If we examine the historical position of the third branch of the clan we soon see why their claim to follow on the direct line is still a debatable one.

In actual research I have failed to find any instance of the son of a third sister entering the direct line to the Paramountcy. There are instances that will be given later of the sons of the third sisters becoming chiefs, but such occurrences usually resulted in the formation of separate and distinct lines of chiefs. It may be contended that this was only because death cut them off before their chance came, and that these other chieftainships were created so as to give them a chance of power whilst they were waiting to see what happened to the sons of the elder sisters. That may be, but it is an assumption that cannot now be proved. Violent death in wars and quarrels must have cut off as many scions of the first family as of the third in the past, and it is strange that, although there have been third sisters with sons many times in past lineages, it is only now they are enabled to
613 approach the main line.

643 There are two more historical facts that seem to show that the third
644 sister is not on the same footing as the first two. At the moment only the
551 two *namfumu* Chandamukulu and Mukukamfumu possess *babenye* or tribal
[778] relics. These are the sacred objects that all chiefs and other tribal personages have and that are inherited with the name and post. Mushimba C11 had none, perhaps only because she had not inherited a name, but this fact alone would place her on a definitely lower plane than the other two women and indicate that she is not really of the same class. I have already told how Mushimba C11 was not allowed to go to Kabamba for fear she should usurp the post and relics of Mukukamfumu. So long as there were two *namfumu* living there was no question then of creating the third one. I have already pointed out that never before has a third name been inherited, although Goodall's big table and the histories of the minor chieftainships

give many examples of third sisters with sons. This also seems to indicate that the third sister was not considered as an important bearer of a name. Mushimba C11 died in 1928 and she was the first of that name. In 1943 the Paramount said that the name of Mushimba should be perpetuated and he called Sampa E12, classificatory granddaughter of deceased, Mushimba II. It should be understood that all names, are inherited. There is a Nakasafya called after B5 but she is not a *namfumu*. But in the case of Mushimba the name now appears again for a second time as a *namfumu* in a direct line of inheritance. But the councillors, in spite of the Paramount's statement, are still undecided as to whether E12 should still retain the name Sampa or be called Mushimba. So that even the perpetuation of a third name is still not completely settled. 551 613 643 644

These historical facts show that in the past, whatever the real reasons may have been, the third sister and her sons were not concerned with the line to the Paramountcy. If they are to be in the future is presumably a matter for the main tribal council, or that part of it concerned with succession, to decide. There are however a few administrative factors which might influence the council either now or in the future. I think I should give them here in order to complete this full discussion of the position of the third branch of the clan. 613 643 644

To restrict all claims to the Paramountcy and its attendant chieftainships to the sons of the elder two sisters only would, of course, simplify the succession considerably. The succession of Bemba chiefs is complicated and intricate mainly because it involves so many chieftainships, which are necessary in a large tribe, and because the system is spread over so many wide-flung administrative districts. When the present Chitimukulu D1 inherited it took a Government enquiry nine months to verify that he was the right man, and only the descendants of two Chandamukulus and a Mukukamfumu were involved. If the line is allowed to continue to the extreme right and involve any number of *namfumu*, then the number of scions who have to be considered will become greater every generation. For death will not simplify matters so easily as it did in the past. This complication by number does not arise when a line of descent goes down vertically, or perhaps I should say, horizontally only in one branch. So that for administrative convenience it would be better to contain the succession within more definite lines. 613 622 643 644

Secondly, with the line restricted there will not be so much shifting of chiefs on promotion from one district to another. For with more emphasis on a vertical descent it is more probable that the man to inherit is not an existing chief but a young man, nephew to deceased, instead of a cousin of the same generation. 622

Thirdly this would help to stop a long succession of old men—brother following brother and cousin following cousin. There would be a more constant stream of younger men obtaining chieftainships. Moreover, this would give Government a chance to educate men who have a reasonable prospect of becoming chiefs. At the moment there are too many men of the same generation to be considered. We have had a series of old, conservative chiefs. It is true that the new people following at the moment are younger but, and this really important, they are all practically of the same age since they are of the same generation. So that in ten years' time we shall again see many important Bemba chieftainships held by old men.

622 If this horizontal reading of the table is extended beyond one or two branches of the clan there is not so much hope of getting a constant leavening of younger men. Most of the chiefs in the direct line to the Paramountcy will be much of the same age.

Lastly, the Superior Authority is being encouraged to cut down the number of redundant chieftainships. This will emphasise still more not only the intricacy of the descent but will make it still more obvious that only old men will become chiefs. If the horizontal line of succession is carried across as far as it will go and there are a reduced number of chieftainships this not only means that the claimants may have to be traced through a series of dead men but also that the general age of men succeeding will be still higher. For there will be so many cousins without chieftainships who must get them before the younger sons of *namfumu*.

613 That concludes the discussion on the place and status of the present third branch of the clan. The historical and administrative arguments
643 seem to be on the side of its members being ignored as regards the Paramountcy and in favour of them being restricted to their own separate little chieftainship of Shimumbi. What attitude the Council will take I do not know. The influence of Kafyama D20, the man who has a lot to gain, is considerable as he is a very assertive character. He will deal very roughly with any suggestion that history does not support his claims. However, whatever may happen in the immediate future this examination of the place of the third branch may be useful if ever a Council does consider simplification of the system.

500 Suppose this third branch was cut out. How would the descent go? Referring again to the table it means that Chikwanda D15 is the last man of his generation to be considered: that Shimumbi D18 and Kafyama D20 remain a separate entity and receive no promotion from their own chieftainship of Shimumbi. Thus when either Chitimukulu D1 or Mwamba D3 dies the Mpepo would become vacant. The descent would then drop a line to Chakwangashi E3, the son of Chandamukulu Chabili D7. (Chikwanda would not want the Mpepo as it is a less post than his.) The descent would go downwards instead of so far across. Kasonde D8, the next sister, only has daughters so the next vacancy might go to Mubanga E8, the son of Mubanga D9. If any of the sisters only have daughters or no issue then the offspring of a third sister would have to be considered, although the sons of the daughters themselves would not lose seniority. In the case of Chandamukulu II C4 and III C5 we have an instance of the line of a more senior sister dying out as regards succession and the next sister taking the place of the more senior one.

Thus the descent would be simplified and restricted. A glance at the line E, below that of the present chiefs shows how the number of female descendants is increasing. The time may come when not two or three sisters, but perhaps four or five, have to be considered and the line to the Paramountcy become still more complicated.

### (c) The Present and Future Succession.

643 I must remind readers of the rules enunciated in subsection (a).[1] That
644 the table is read as a book, horizontally from left to right, and that all the sons of one generation must be passed before there is a switch back to the left and down to a lower generation.

[1] [see cat. 116, pp. 4-11. - Analysis]

These rules can be plainly seen at the moment. The living sons of a senior Chandamukulu, Kangwa Chonya, C4 are Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1 and Mwamba V D3. Their half-brothers are the living sons of the next sister who also became Chandamukulu C5, and are Nkolemfumu Musenga D6 and Mpepo Mutale D10. There were no other real sisters of that generation but a cousin of the same generation who became Mukukamfumu C8 has two living sons, of the same generation and cousins to the above mentioned four leading chiefs, and they are Nkula Musungu D14 and Chikwanda Bwembia D15. Thus the direct line of the Paramountcy is strictly as follows at the moment: 643 644

Chitimukulu D1, Mwamba D3, Nkolemfumu D5, Mpepo D10, Nkula D14, Chikwanda D15. Then if the third branch is also included, the next two are Shimumbi D18 and Musungu Kafyama D20. That is how the line goes to-day but it does not always follow that the succession is in the order of the names quoted here. Mwamba will perhaps normally succeed in the future, as this post is now the second in importance and as a man reaches the Paramountcy his next successor will follow to the next most important post, and the successor will normally be a brother or cousin. But it happened in the past that Nkulas were from a more senior *namfumu* than the Mwambas, in which case the Nkulas succeeded. But this does not apply at the moment. The point is that the names of the immediate succession will not always be in the order that now follows Mwamba.

The present Chandamukulu Chabili D7, is sister of Nkolemfumu D6 and thus she is of a younger generation than the mothers of Nkolemfumu D6 and Nkula D14. Her son is not yet a chief nor is the son of her sister Mubanga D9. These sons may follow either Mpepo D10 or Chikwanda D15 or Kafyama D20 according to deaths and according to whether the third branch is included in the main line. For reasons explained below, the main one being that because Musungu Nkula D14 and Bwembia Chikwanda D15 are so much older in years than Mpepo D10 that they have no hope of the Paramountcy I do not think Musungu Nkula D14 will move from his present post at all, and Bwembia Chikwanda D15 would lose in salary by becoming Nkolemfumu. So that, if only the two branches of the clan are considered, Chakwangashya E3 the eldest son of the present Chandamukulu D7 may follow Mutale D10, as Mpepo and Mubanga's D9 son Mubanga E9 after him. If the third branch is included Kafyama D20 will get a chieftainship before them and Shimumbi D18 may want the Nkolemfumu as the salary is higher.

At the moment the two chiefs Musungu Nkula D14 and Bwembia Chikwanda D15 of the existing Mukukamfumu branch of the clan are older in years than Mpepo D10 of the Chandamukulu branch, and therefore it is unlikely that either Nkula D14 or Chikwanda D15 will live long enough to get nearer to the Paramountcy, although Chikwanda D15 may become Nkula when his brother dies. The Chikwanda post gets a higher salary than Mpepo's or Nkolemfumu's, so if within the next few years Musenga Nkolemfumu D6 becomes Paramount and Mutale Mpepo D10 becomes Mwamba then the direct horizontal list of names—Chitimukulu, Mwamba, Nkolemfumu, Mpepo—would in all probability be broken. Neither Nkula D14 nor Chikwanda D15, though the next in succession, would take the lower paid post of Nkolemfumu in which case they would stay where they are. Chakwangashya E3 would then be the next to be Nkolemfumu unless the third branch is brought in and Shimumbi D18 or Kafyama D20 takes the post. But the series of names would then run (if D1 and D3 are dead) Chitimukulu, Mwamba, Nkula, Chikwanda, followed

643 644 by Chakwangashya E3 as Nkolemfumu, Mubanga E9 as Mpepo (or else Shimumbi D18 and Kafyama D20). This shows that Dr. Richards statement (*op. cit.* (1), page 103) that the present series of chieftainships is tending to become fixed in the main branch is somewhat misleading. The series can only be fixed if we cease to read the table horizontally and stop at a first or second branch. For example, if the third branch wins its claim to be considered, Kafyama D20 would take the Mpepo on the death of the present Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1 because D3, D6 and D10 would move up and the Mpepo is too small a post for Nkula D14 or Chikwanda D15 or Shimumbi D18. Moreover, in the line D, Chandamukulu Chabili D7 has only one living son Chakwangashya E3 and neither she nor her sister Kasonde D8 are likely to have more offspring. Mubanga D9 has one son and may have more. So it seems in the future that the series of chieftainships mentioned will not stay in the one branch of the clan. (Another possibility that would break the series of names is that if Chikwanda were to die then Nkolemfumu might claim that post because the salary is higher.)

At the moment, on the genealogical table, Mpepo D10 appears as fourth in the line of succession and Nkula D14 the fifth, but the death of any of the first four would bring Musungu Nkula D14 up to number four, whether he kept his present post or not. It is not the actual name that counts but the place in the genealogical table. The present Nkula D14 would not move from his existing post, I imagine, until at least three of the four men ahead of him had died and thus left vacant the Mwamba. He could watch junior men, for example, Kafyama D20 or Chabili's son, E3, taking the Mpepo and the Nkolemfumu and he could still claim his right to the Mwamba or the Chitimukulu before them. There is a very present chance that Chikwanda D15 could become Nkolemfumu if he wished, because both Chitimukulu D1 and Mwamba D3 will probably die soon. But if Chikwanda D15 does become Nkolemfumu, which I doubt since the salary at the moment is less, he could not go on and become Mwamba before his elder brother Nkula D14, unless the latter agreed.

554 622 643 At this point I should emphasise that both as regards prestige and salary there is a distinct break after the three main chieftainships of Chitimukulu, Mwamba and Nkula. At the moment, as I have repeated, a chief called Nkolemfumu happens to be third in succession. But the post is not important by salary or status (see later) and once the present series is broken by the deaths of the two leading chiefs this post of Nkolemfumu will be taken by a man much farther away than third in succession to the Paramountcy. Of the chiefs of royal blood the Chikwanda is now the most important modern post after the first three for he gets the next biggest salary after Nkula on account of the size of his area and population. Hence my statements that Chikwanda D15 will no doubt wait and follow his brother Nkula D14, rather than take a post such as the Nkolemfumu which would give him a lower salary but not jump him nearer to the Paramountcy. That position a man cannot lose whatever chieftainship he takes.

551 622 643 I enlarge on this particular chieftainship of Nkolemfumu in order to show that the mere possession of its name does not bring the holder nearer to the Paramountcy. There are other royal chieftainships paid higher or equal salaries, and since it is only the place in the genealogical table that counts, a holder of one of these can hang on to it until a post such as Nkula or Mwamba becomes vacant. I must emphasise that genealogical seniority entitles a man in theory to claim any of the three leading chieftainships,

not because he happens to be one of a series of names. That is strictly speaking, but as I describe elsewhere the dichotomy of the branches and political considerations have kept the Nkula in one branch for two generations now. 551 622 643

This brings me to another interesting point connected with the break in the series of names. There was a chance that the series might have been Chitimukulu, Mwamba, Nkula in a direct unbroken line. Nkolemfumu Mbonkali D5 stated his intention of claiming the Nkula on the death of Bwalya Nkula IV D12. He contended, and quite rightly, that he was senior to Musungu Chikwanda D14 and could claim it. If he had succeeded we should have had the new series mentioned. A glance at line C2 and C3 shows that an Nkula had been immediately after a Mwamba in the table in the past too.

The fact that Mbonkali D5 did not get the Nkula was due to the same reason that Chikwanda III C6 was not followed by D1, 2, 3 or 4. That there was the desire to give the branch of Mukukamfumu one or more of the higher posts. That was the reason openly given in 1934 when Bwalya Nkula IV D12 died. Such a reason emphasises the dichotomy of families, and Dr. Richards' statement that certain chieftainships are being stabilised in certain branches of the family may be true in a limited way such as this. But it is a dangerous argument for the present junior branches to press because if carried to logical conclusions it would freeze such chieftainships as the Nkula and Shimumbi in their own lines and tend to imply that they could not leave them to pass to the Mwamba. The tendency to split as regards the Nkula branch only started one generation back in line C in the present lineage, and some of the arguments given in the last subsection against the promotion of the third branch of the family could equally well apply for the restricting of the second branch to its own line. However that is a matter that is the future concern of the Superior Native Authority and Government. 622

Nkula D14 would take the post of Mwamba because the salary is bigger and perhaps because the status is higher too. Nkula V D14 makes a great show at the moment of not waiting for intervening deaths but of claiming the Paramountcy direct after Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1. But, as a glance at the genealogical table proves, all he has the right to do is to follow after the present Mpepo D10 to whatever post that chief attains. Nkula's mother C8 was junior to the mother C5 of Nkolemfumu D6 and Mpepo D10, so that Nkula D14 is junior to them in the right of succession. [554]

### (*d*) Conclusion.

There are one or two interesting explanations necessary to complete this description of the line to the Paramountcy. 643

The status of the three or four leading chiefs seems puzzling at times. The Mwamba has often fought against the Chitimukulu. The Nkula has not, but perhaps only because the Nkula is a comparatively recent post and has not had the necessary time to build up power. There are several occasions on which Nkula might have fought had there been no European administration to restrain him. 622 643 669

Generally speaking, as Dr. Richards indicates, authority, power and prerogatives depend upon descent and kinship and all branches of the royal clan can claim connection with the original family of which a traditional Chitimukulu was head. 643 [614]

643 [551] Chitimukulu was head. The Chitimukulu is the oldest name of a royal chief. It is the name carried by the most senior member of the crocodile totem and as such it demands the most respect. The sway of a Chitimukulu is as much moral and spiritual as temporal. His temporal power too is the greatest of the chiefs. He lives in and rules Lubemba, the stronghold of the tribe, and in the beginning all appointments of chiefs to help him hold the widening sphere of Bemba rule came from him. He also has the largest number of people in his own area.

622 The Mwamba only appears as a hereditary chief two generations before the present lineage and his area and population are still much smaller than the Paramount's, even after some Mwambas have increased their power by war against the Paramount. Thus by tradition and age the Mwamba is second to the Paramount though at various times he has made himself politically independent of the Paramount (5).

The Nkula is the most recent of the main appointments. I tell the history of it in Section 2 and the high status is no doubt partly due to the fact that the modern Nkula is a continuation of a chieftainship once held by a senior house. I believe also that geography has helped to make him so powerful as well as the fact that the house now is that of the second senior mother. The Chambeshi is said to be a religious boundary as well as a [643 788] geographical one. A Paramount has occasionally crossed it but only after performing a ceremony including the dropping of beads into the river. Thus Nkula has built up a geographical power to the east of the Chambeshi. The genealogical drift of the Mukukamfumu branch of the clan away from the Paramountcy has emphasised his independence. But the age of his title puts him below Mwamba in status although now his population is much larger.

[551] The name Nkolemfumu is older than Nkula but the reason Nkula is now higher in status is because there has been a gap in the continuity of the Nkolemfumu name and because the Nkula now has part of the area that was the care of Nkolemfumu. The old Nkolemfumu lived to the west of the Chambeshi, as now, but his sway stretched across into part of what is now Nkula's country. When Chitimukulu Chileshye Chepela A2 usurped the throne an Nkolemfumu had just died. Chileshye A2 had no one to send to inherit the place (Bwembia A2 was a fool) so he brought all the *babenye* relics and gave them to the care of Mwamba who also took over most of the area. When Chitapankwa B4 became Chitimukulu he usurped the Nkula for his family, giving his brother Sampa B4 as Nkula I the old Nkolemfumu area to the east of the Chambeshi. Later he re-created a smaller Nkolemfumu which he gave to Mubanga Chipoya C2, who thus became Nkolemfumu I of a new lineage.

551 554 622 643 There is thus no doubt about the traditional order of status of the three leading names. Chitimukulu is first, Mwamba is second and Nkula third. Beyond that I doubt if it is possible to say more than that status perhaps follows genealogical closeness to the Paramountcy. The Mwamba probably will stick as second, even in genealogical closeness, from now on, but Nkula comes third in status by tradition as well as in modern importance however far away to the right he may be on a genealogical table.

622 The Nkolemfumu succession has gone fairly regularly since Mubanga Chipoya C2, the first of the name in the new lineage. When he died, Mutale Sichansa C3 and Chikwanda C6 were involved in the Nkula and Chikwanda

## Section 3.—THE LINE OF THE THIRD BRANCH OF THE CLAN CHIEF SHIMUMBI.

If my historical reasons are valid only two branches of the clan can claim by precedent a connection with the succession to the Paramountcy, and, strictly speaking, this branch now headed by Chief Shimumbi D18 should have been dealt with under Section 5, as merely one of several royal lines. But of recent years this branch of the clan has been exerting a claim to be classed with the two main branches. A claim that has never before been granted to any other junior branch and one that is causing so much discussion at the moment that I thought it best to give it a separate section and add a few more notes to the full enquiry given in Section 1.

The present Chief Shimumbi (Njoko) D18 is the fourth to hold the title but he is no relation to the former holders. These earlier chiefs were descended from a woman said to be a junior cousin of Kanyanta Bwalya A4 and form an example of a third branch being " too far away " to come into Paramountcy line. This branch had a line of its own and its leading chief was Shilukamba Chikwanda. When he died Chitimukulu Bwembia A6 agreed to Chikwanda C6 his nephew taking the *babenye*. But the line still went on through Shilukamba's sister and it held three small chieftainships of Shimumbi, Kalulu and Chibanda.

The last Shimumbi III Mwambamuchele died about 1929 but he was not succeeded by any of his relatives. The Paramount wanted a chieftainship for his nearer cousins so he put in Njoko D18 as Shimumbi IV and at the same time he deprived Kalulu and Chibanda of chiefly rights. The survivors of this branch of the clan still look to Chitimukulu Bwembia A6 as their uncle, although the real position of the mother of the house and her relationship to Kanyanta Bwalya A4 are very obscure.

This history of the earlier clan which was cut off, although headed by a royal sister, is but one of many such occurrences which tend to prove the theory that there is a stop in the horizontal line after two fertile branches.

So Njoko D18 became Shimumbi IV. This man was the son of Mushimba C11 who was sister to Chitimukulu Ponde C10. Shimumbi D18 has one brother, Kafyama D20, and he should succeed Shimumbi if the third branch of clan is cut out of the line to the Paramountcy. If this third branch of the clan is perpetuated as a separate chieftainship then Kafyama D20 would be followed by his nephew Mutali E22, son of the elder sister Mutali D21. If the third branch of the family is allowed to enter the line to the Paramountcy then Kafyama D20 will get a post at the first death (as described earlier) without having to wait for his brother's stool. This will be Mpepo, the lowest post, which will be vacated by a general move up. Kafyama D20 is in the peculiar position at the moment of being the only royal man of his generation without a chieftainship, but as families increase and if the number of chieftainships is reduced there will be many younger sons left with their ambitions unrealised in the future.

## Section 4.—THE LINE OF THE ELDEST SON OF THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF MAKASA.

I have headed this section as above because it is the simplest way of indicating that the holder of the Makasa is thus so regarded, although he may not be the actual son of any chief who has been Paramount. He is the most senior son of all the chiefs of the royal clan. The holder of this post has an important part to play in the inheritance ceremonies of a Paramount. He goes over to the capital as soon as the body of the chief starts its journey to the burial grave at Mwalule and he stays in command of the capital until the new Paramount is appointed. He has to make the culminating remark acknowledging that the proposed Chitimukulu is his "father" and therefore the right man to succeed. It is said that his power at the appointment is greater than that of the *Bakabilo* (hereditary councillors). That is why he is known as the eldest son, and there have been attempts in the past by prospective claimants to the Paramountcy to get in a family member as Makasa ahead of succession, so that the claimant's way may be smoothed.

All the sons of chiefs who hold appointment naturally trace their descent through their fathers. The line to the Paramountcy and other royal chieftainships is through royal women. With the sons it is the other way about—they are from a royal father. The sons are not then of royal blood—*beneng'andu*.

In the Makasa succession, as in the main lines, the genealogical table is read across from left to right and the most senior son of the most senior father is taken as Makasa.

It has happened that only sons of Chitimukulu's, Mwamba's and Nkulas' have ever held the post, but even such a narrow limit has given scope for intrigue. The last Makasa of the old lineage was a son of a Chitimukulu. In the present lineage the first was a son of Chitimukulu Chileshe A2. Then came a son of Chitimukulu Bwembya A6. Then in succession came two sons of Chitimukulu Chitapankwa B4 who jumped his sons over the heads of several senior claimants. But when he died, after his career of upsetting most traditions of succession, the Makasa succession went back to a more senior line again and another son of Chitimukulu Chileshe A2 got the post. Following him came Musanya the son of Nkula Shichansa C3 and then Ndakala the son of Mwamba Mubanga Chipoya C2. This last Makasa, the seventh of the present lineage died in 1939.

The rule of succession sounds simple, but actually power politics and personal choice have great sway in the appointment of the sons of chiefs. For example, the most senior son living to-day is Tungati the son of Mwamba Kapalaula B3. He is also senior to the Makasa who died in 1939. This latter man was Ndakala the son of Nkula Shichansa C3, and he got the post ahead of Tungati. The reasons appear to be that he was already Mubanga which was usually considered the stepping stone to the Makasa and that Tungati who was then Luali hoped for the wealthier post of Mporokoso.

(c) Territorial Traditions.

557 622 643 This guiding rule of east and west appointments has also broken down, but only of recent years, and there are only three instances of it so far. Mporokoso is the senior of all posts traditionally in the hands of Mwamba. It differs from Makasa in that the Makasa can be held by the senior son whether he was son of Chitimukulu or Mwamba or Nkula. But in the Mporokoso succession only the sons of Mwambas were considered in the past. So that when an Mporokoso died in 1933, the line of heirs ran as follows: Tungati, Luchembe, Lukaka and Misengo (now Mak[illegible]a). But Chitimukulu D1 appointed his eldest son Chisangaponde. He was thus pressing his own son at the expense of the sons of dead chiefs and also breaking the rule of direction for the first time. In return in 1939 Mwamba claimed the Mubanga for Lwali as we have said. The high salary of Mporokoso no doubt affected Chitimukulu's desire to put his son in the post. The third instance is the history of the son of Chitimukulu who is now Chipalo. When the minor post of Kasonka became vacant by that man becoming Chisangaponde, a son of the present Chitimukulu D1 called Sampa, was put in. When Chipalo died in 1937, Kasonka Sampa was made Chipalo and the Superior Native Authority took the opportunity of deleting the Kasonka as a chieftainship.

It seems from these three modern instances that the old rule of direction is being abandoned and I see no point in laying any emphasis on it in the future. It is obvious that salaries will have a greater influence on appointments in the future and I think the appointments of such sons as are left, after a campaign of amalgamation, can be trusted to Chitimukulu and Mwamba and the councillors. If there is quarrelling then the above list of control of appointments may be useful. Why Mwamba should have had a longer list of appointments than Chitimukulu I can only surmise. Of course, when the Mwamba becomes Chitimukulu he often finds his sons holding posts whose future succession is in the hands of another Mwamba so the distinction is not really important. I have already described how various Mwambas were noted warriors and when an area had been conquered from another tribe it was natural for the victorious Mwamba to put in one of his own sons to hold it. Mwambas such as Kapalaula B3 and Mubanga Chipoya C2 were certainly better fighters than many Paramounts and that is perhaps why their influence spread rapidly and they were able to appoint so many sons to newly won areas.

(d) Further Individual Details.

Before leaving this Section, I should give a little more information about some chieftainships.

The death of Mporokoso will lead to a good deal of discussion. In the past, the Sunkutu was considered the stepping-stone to the Mporokoso but the post was abolished with the death of the last Sunkutu. Chitimukulu D1 sent his son Chisangaponde II to be Mporokoso but Mwamba D3 sent a son to become Sunkutu. He is now a village headman but the Council obviously intend to keep the name as a stepping-stone. If then the Chitimukulu of the day keeps the appointment to the post he may try to put his own son in as at present. The more senior sons of a Chitimukulu, such as Chipalo, may claim it. On the other hand, if Mwamba claims the appointment, as in the past, the present Munkonge and Misengo and Sunkutu enter the lists. These are present-day claimants but if Mporokoso goes on

## APPENDIX.

For ease of reference I give below the complete list of Bemba chieftainships as gazetted by Government at the moment, and also the salaries they draw from the Bemba Treasury. Those in brackets have been mentioned in this paper but have been deleted as chieftainships.

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It is not possible to give a complete list in order of status, with the exception of the first three chiefs who definitely are, in order, Chitimukulu, Mwamba and Nkula.

[643]

In actual honour all *benang'andu* would follow before the sons. Makasa is the first of the sons. But in fact, apart from the first three royal chiefs, it is difficult to say whether any more chiefs can be ranked at all permanently by name according to status. A temporary list might be prepared for the *benang'andu* but any deaths might alter it. The sons might be arranged in order of seniority from the age of their fathers but that too would be altered by deaths, and moreover the sons, apart from Makasa, are not traditionally graded in honour at all. Their salaries should thus go with their population and work.

I put in this note as sometimes Chitimukulu is asked, for Treasury purposes, for a list of chiefs in order of status. It has differed every time, and, apart from the first three, it cannot really be given.

### Kasama District.

| | £ | | £ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chitimukulu ... ... | 140 | Menga ... ... | 10 |
| Mwamba ... ... | 84 | Misengo ... ... | 8 |
| Nkolemfumu ... ... | 24 | Changala ... ... | 10 |
| Makasa ... ... | 30 | Chilangwa ... ... | 8 |
| Chimbola ... ... | 10 | Chisangaponde ... | 6 |
| Munkonge ... ... | 30 | (Mfungo) ... ... | 3 |
| Kabwibwi ... ... | 10 | | |

### Chinsali District.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Nkula ... ... ... | 48 |
| Mubanga ... ... | 14 |
| Mukwikile ... ... | 8 |
| Shimwalule ... ... | 8 |
| Nkweto ... ... | 8 |
| Mwaba ... ... | 6 |
| Musanya ... ... | 6 |

### Mpika District.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Chikwanda ... | 30 |
| Mpepo ... ... | 15 |
| Luchembe ... ... | 9 |
| Masongo ... ... | 8 |
| Lukaka ... ... | 8 |

### Luwingu District.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Shimumbi ... ... | 18 |
| Chipalo ... ... | 18 |
| Tungati ... ... | 18 |
| Muchereka ... ... | 12 |
| (Kasonka) ... ... | — |

### Mporokoso District.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Mporokoso ... ... | 42 |
| Kaliminwa ... | 24 |
| (Sunkutu) ... ... | 6 |

### Kawambwa District.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| (Lwali) ... ... | — |

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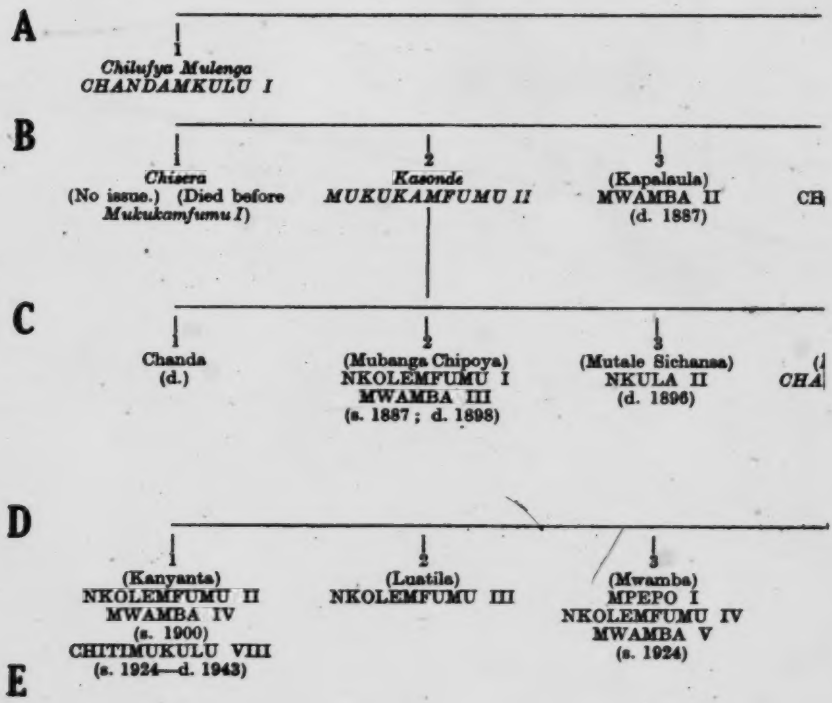


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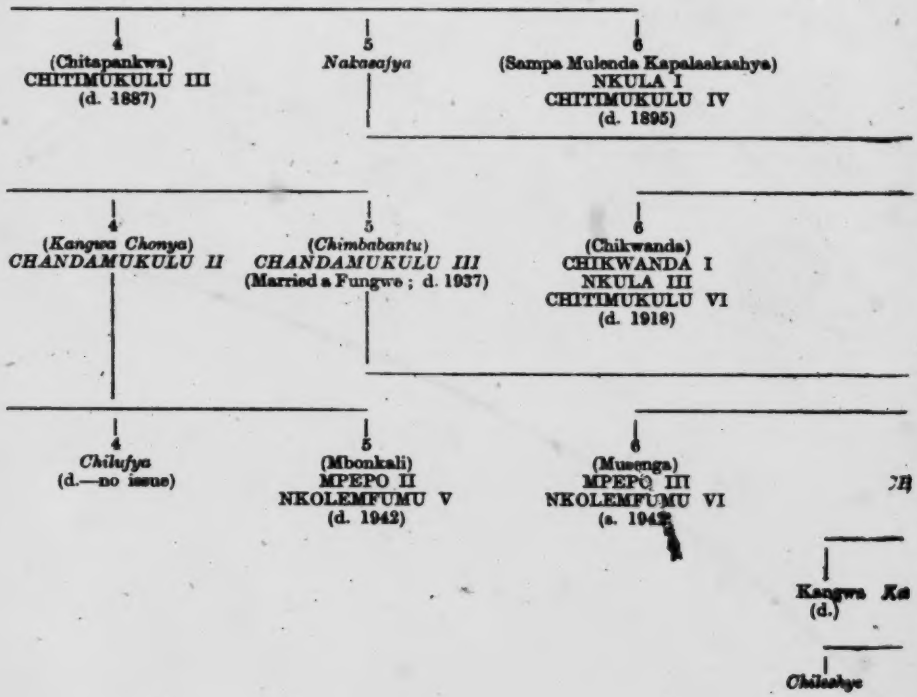


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# THE BEMBA

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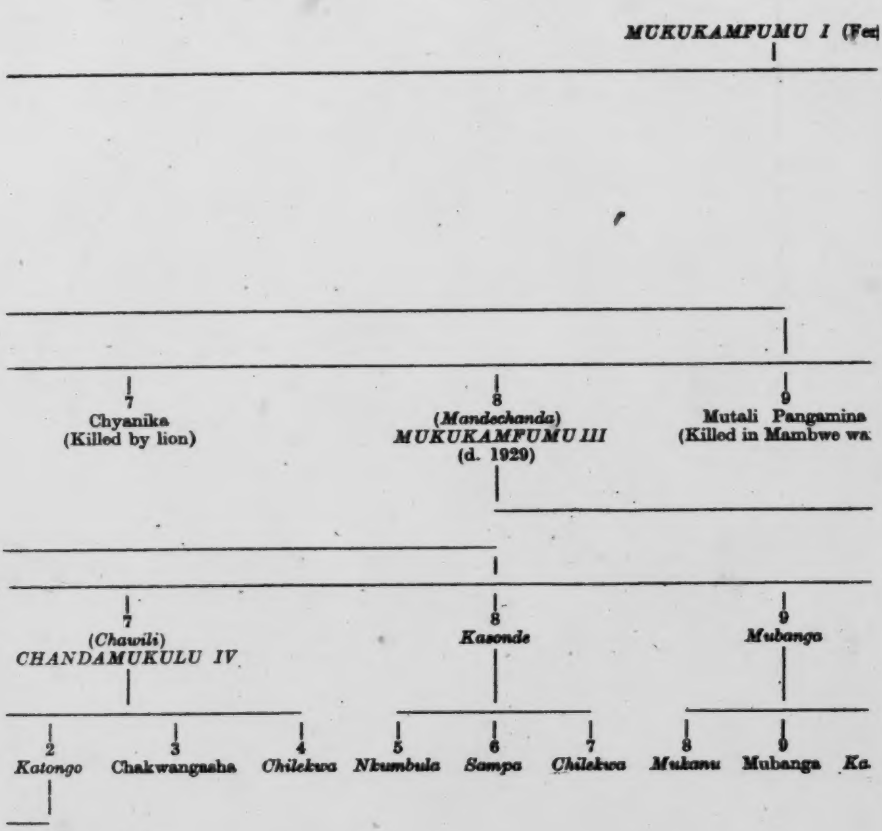


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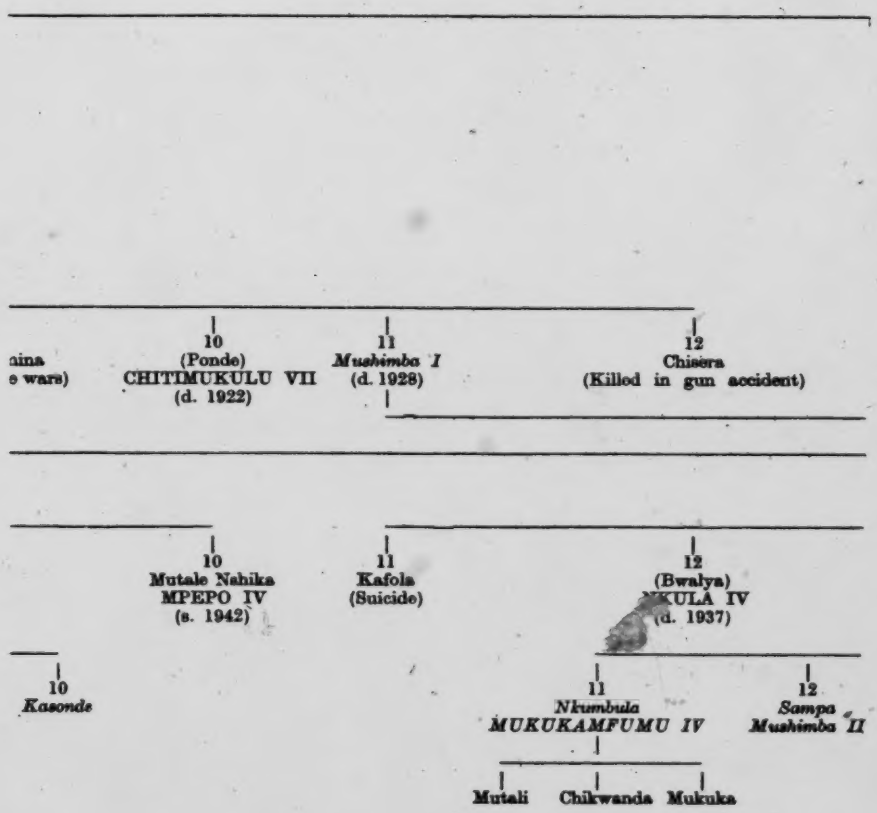
(Female.)

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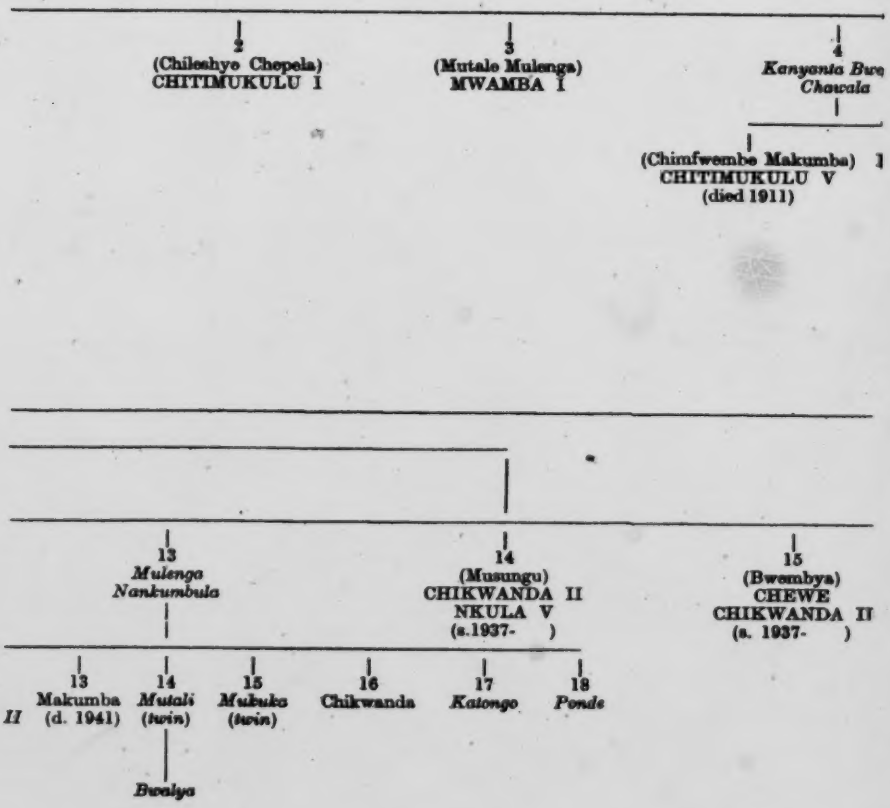


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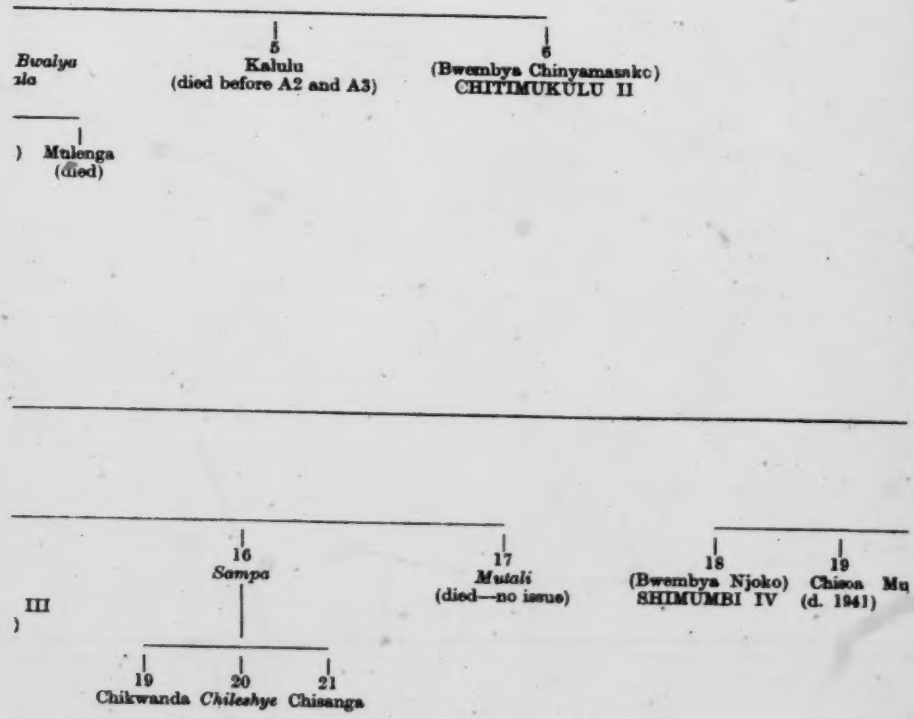
own. See next table.

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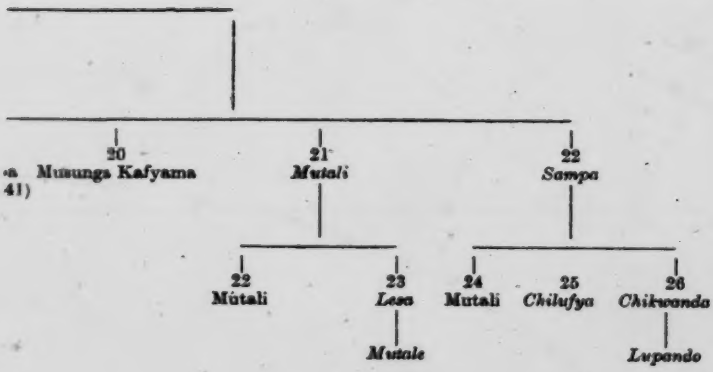


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7: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5



language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring *Cibisa* or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, and take delight in describing the military exploits of their ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines his succession to different offices and his status in the community, although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan (*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line. Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting. Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank —if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena ŋandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the *imikoa* are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5



A chief's village (*umusumba*) is very much larger than that of a commoner. Inhabitants of the capital are composed of relatives of the chief, his followers, and also a number of families which moved there originally to win royal favour and have become accustomed to court life.[1] Since a chief's reputation depends largely on the size of his capital, and his councillors, courtiers, and administrative officers were drawn largely from his villagers, the *umusumba* is an important unit in the political machine. The late Nkula's village had about 400 huts when I visited it in 1931, that of the Citimukulu 150 in 1938. The capitals of pre-European days were evidently very much larger. These communities were divided into sections (*ifitente*, sing. *icitente*) and though nowadays there are nine *ifitente* at the paramount's village, there were formerly thirty to forty, according to native accounts.

The whole Bemba territory is divided into districts (*ifyalo*, sing. *icalo*). The *icalo* is a geographical unit with a fixed boundary and a name dating from historical times, e.g. the district of the Citimukulu is known as Lubemba, the country of the Bemba, and that of Mwamba, Ituna. These districts are territories originally allotted to members of the royal family, but once so divided they have never been sub-divided to provide smaller chieftainships for a new generation of princes as has happened in some parts of South Africa.

But the *icalo* is also a political unit. It is the district ruled over by a chief with a fixed title—the name of the first ruler to be appointed over each particular strip of land, always a close relative of one of the earlier Citimukulus. There are several types of chief, the paramount, who has his own *icalo*, as well as being overlord of the whole Bemba territory; the territorial chiefs, five or more in number, who have under them sub-chiefs who may rule over very small tracts of country or, rather, over a few villages.[2]

Each of these chiefs is known by the same title *mfumu* and each *icalo* is a more or less self-contained unit, a replica of the social structure of the other. Each capital has its own court, however small. Each chief has rights over the labour of his own villages. They work for him only and not for the paramount as happens among

[1] The phrase '*umwino musumba*' ('inhabitant of the capital') is used to indicate a 'chief's man' or a person of specially polished manners and knowledge of affairs.

[2] Mwamba has as a sub-chief, the Munkonge, and the Nkula has Shimwalule, Mwaba, Mukuikile, Nkweto, &c.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5



the Zulu, Swazi and other tribes with the regiment system. The *icalo* is also a ritual unit. At each capital are the sacred relics (*babenye*) of the first holders of the chiefly title and their ancestral spirits are thought to act as tutelary deities of the district, and are worshipped at the *umusumba*, at village shrines, and old hut sites throughout the country, and are also commonly supposed to act as guardian spirits to children born within the *icalo*.[1] Naturally the ritual and political organization of the paramount's capital is more elaborate than that of his inferiors, but even the smallest sub-chief maintains his miniature court and tries to ape the state of those above him, while the bigger territorial chiefs sometimes rivalled the power of the Citimukulu in the old days.

The territorial chieftainships are arranged in order of precedence, according to their nearness to the centre of the country—Lubemba—and the antiquity of their office. To the most important of these chiefdoms—the Mwambaship, the Nkulaship, the Nkolemfumuship, and the Mpepoship, for instances—the Citimukulu appoints his nearest relatives, the one succeeding the other in order of seniority. Thus the present Citimukulu, Kanyanta, has acted in turn as the Nkolemfumu, and the Mwamba before succeeding to the paramountcy (cf. chart on p. 102). On the other hand, the sub-chieftainships have tended to become concentrated in local branches of the royal family, and the paramount's strong grip over the country and his intimate knowledge of affairs at the courts of his fellow chiefs is certainly weaker in these outlying districts than in the case of chiefdoms ruled by his close relatives.

To the commoner, membership of an *icalo* means his allegiance to the chief of that territory. He will describe himself as an inhabitant of a district, such as *Icinga*, i.e. *mwine Icinga* or, alternatively, as the subject of its chief, Nkula, i.e. *mwine Nkula*, and both terms are synonymous. He may move from village to village within the *icalo*, but he remains his chief's man. The latter, in his turn, reckons his assets, not in terms of the size of his territory or its natural resources, but rather by the number of his people and in particular the villages he has under his rule.

(3) *Rank*. Rank is a marked feature of Bemba society. It is based on kinship, real or fictitious, with the chief. All members of the royal crocodile clan (*Bena ŋandu*) are entitled to special respect, precedence on ritual and social occasions, and sometimes

[1] Hence the great preponderance of one or two birth-names in each district.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5



in prayer. When a man or woman dies, his or her social personality must be immediately perpetuated by a successor who passes through a special ritual (*ukupyanika*) and thus acquires the name, the symbols of succession (a bow for a man and a girdle for the woman), and the *umupashi* of the dead man. By this social identification, a man assumes the latter's position in the kinship-group, uses the same kinship terms and, in the case of a chief, it is almost impossible to tell when a man is describing incidents which took place in his own life or those of an ancestor two or three generations dead. So important is this social perpetuation of the dead considered that immediately after a death, before the successor has finally been appointed, a small boy or girl, usually a maternal grandchild, is chosen to inherit the name of the deceased temporarily (*ukunwa menshi*, 'to drink the water'). He or she is given some small piece of the latter's property and thereafter addressed as grandfather or grandmother, or whatever the right kinship term may be.

In the same way, a chief, once he has succeeded to the name, the spirit, and the sacred relics of his predecessor, has magic influence over the productive capacity of his whole territory. His ill health or death, his pleasure or displeasure, his blessings or curses, can affect the prosperity of the people, and even his sex life reacts on the state of the community.[1] For a chief to break a sex taboo is an act which may cause calamity to the whole people, and the rites by which he is purified after sexual contacts form one of the most important elements in the politico-religious ceremonial requiring the participation of thirty or forty hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) in the case of the paramount. Conversely, legitimate sex intercourse, especially as prescribed on certain ritual occasions, may actually be a health-giving influence. Any headman has a certain degree of supernatural influence in his own village as the successor to his predecessor's *umupashi*, but a chief has considerably more. For all these reasons, ritual precautions guard the sacred person of a chief. Special taboos must be kept to preserve the ritual purity of the ruler's sacred fire, and his sacred

[1] There are rumours that chiefs were throttled by their hereditary councillors when they were obviously sick unto death, for fear they took 'the land' into the grave with them. This information was sent me by Mr. T. Fox-Pitt after I had left the country and was afterwards checked by Mr. Godfrey Wilson. In fact it is probable that in the old days the Bemba chiefs would fall under Frazer's definition of a 'divine king'.

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food, and to protect his person and that of the sacred relics from the contagion of illness, death, or sex defilement.[1]

The ritual by which a successor to the chieftainship is converted from an ordinary individual to a ruler with almost divine powers, has a good deal of political importance. It confers authority on the priests—in this case hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) who carry it out—and gives them, as we shall see, considerable power to check the chief himself. The complete ritual by which the *umupashi* of a dead ruler is liberated to guard the land he governed, and the new heir is installed, is too complex to describe here and now. Briefly speaking, it consists of the desiccation of the body during a period of a year, from one kafir-corn harvest to the next; its burial in a special grove (with human sacrifices in the old days); and the building of a shrine on the site of the deserted capital. To make the new chief, *bakabilo* must preside at the installation of a new great wife, arrange for the sexual purification of the royal pair, and the lighting of their new sacred fire.[2] They must hand over to the heir the heirlooms (*babenye*) of which they have been in charge during the interregnum, and must finally found a new village and build again the sacred huts in which the relics are to be kept. Such a ceremonial may take eighteen months to two years and the participation of all the *bakabilo* and hereditary buriers (*bafingo*) in the case of the paramount; a lesser time and very many fewer priestly dignitaries in the case of the territorial chiefs. The secrecy and awe surrounding these ceremonies is, I believe, one of the ways by which the people's reverence for their chiefs is maintained.

(*b*) *Legal Rules of Descent and Succession.* Against this background of beliefs as to the continuity between one generation and another, the nature of descent and succession is defined exactly by legal rule. Descent in the royal family is reckoned to the time of first occupation of the country, and twenty-five to thirty Citimukulus are remembered. In the case of a territorial chief, the line of ancestors is not so long, and most are described as having been 'born in the country'. Most of the names honoured are those of men but some are those of women, and it seems that

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xvii.

[2] Hence the importance of the great wife of the chief (*umukolo ua calo*) in the political life of the tribe and the belief that her behaviour also influences the welfare of the land.

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the first ancestress to inhabit a new chiefdom, or one who was a mother of numerous powerful sons and was thus able to found a new branch, could claim to be so respected.[1] But it is to the men holders of titles that most shrines are built.

The hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) also trace their descent to the first arrival for the most part, and tell stories which account for their right to the ritual offices they hold to-day, e.g. the *bafingo* who now bury the chief, claim to be the descendants of those who buried the first Citimukulus when on the march. This reckoning of descent to a definite epoch in history very clearly remembered is of service in maintaining the myth of absolute continuity of the chiefly lines. In actual fact, the present Citimukulu is a descendant of one Cileshye, who seized the throne from the occupier, Cincinta, only four generations back. This branch of usurpers is able to claim descent from the first Citimukulu all the same. The first ancestors are remembered very accurately and their sacred relics kept. The ensuing vagueness in the chain seems to be of no account.

In most types of succession whether to the name and spirit of a dead man or to his office, there are usually two or three potential heirs, and although there are certain rules of priority, it is practically never the case that there is one child known as heir to the chieftainship from birth and brought up as such, as occurs in those South African tribes in which the eldest son of the great wife must always succeed. A Bemba chief, or commoner, is succeeded by his brothers in order of age, next by his sister's children, and, failing them, by his maternal grandsons. Difficulties arise when there is a choice between an older classificatory 'brother', not a sibling, but possibly a mother's sister's son, or an even more distant 'brother' still, and a young man, a maternal nephew who is the child of the deceased's own sister, with whom, as we have seen, his ties are very close. Here the principles of primogeniture conflict with that of propinquity of kinship, in the case of a branch of a family that has been in existence for three or four generations, and it is probable that in these cases the nearest heir is appointed unless he is manifestly unsuitable, when the more distant 'brother'

[1] e.g. Bwalya Cabala, the first ancestress said to have been fetched from Lubaland by her brothers when the latter had occupied what is now Bembaland; or the Nakasafye, grandmother of the present Nkula, who is described as having started a new line, and was evidently a woman of great character as well as the mother of many sons.

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or 'maternal nephew' is selected. I never heard of a regent being appointed for a young man as is commonly done in those Bantu tribes where the heir to the throne is known from his time of birth.

The situation is more complicated in the case of succession to chieftainships, since through the custom of inheriting one big territorial chieftainship after another within the paramount's immediate family, a tradition has grown up that, e.g., the holder of the Mwambaship should always succeed to the Citimukuluship, whatever the priority of kinship. This claim was put forward in the last succession dispute (1925) and is commonly supported by Government officials who naturally prefer a fixed system of succession to the discussion of rival candidates' rights that seems to have been the older procedure. There is also a tendency becoming more and more evident for certain of these bigger chieftainships to be confined to sub-branches of the main royal line, as distinct from sub-chieftainships which are nearly always given to descendants of local branches of the crocodile clan (e.g. the Mwabaship). This constant growth and separation of different sub-lines or houses of the royal clan seems to have been continuous in the past. The chart of the present central branch of the *Bena ŋandu* should make the situation clear. It will be seen that the first and second Citimukulus in this line were siblings, and were succeeded by another pair of own brothers—Citimukulu III and IV, the sons of the first ruler's eldest sister, Candamukulu. The paramountcy then passed to the line of a younger sister, Bwalya Cabala, tradition stating that the eldest maternal nephew of Citimukulu III and IV, then holding office as Mwamba, refused to succeed to the office for various reasons. The title then passed to another pair of brothers in succession, Citimukulu VI and VII, the sons of a younger daughter of Candamukulu—Nakasafye. Hence the famous dispute of 1925 just referred to, between Kanyanta, now Citimukulu, and his mother's mother's sister's grandchild, Bwalya Cangala, then holding the Nkulaship, and reckoned as Kanyanta's classificatory brother. Bwalya claimed that he was own maternal nephew of the dead chief, Ponde, and Kanyanta that he came of an older line and that it had now become established that the Mwambas always succeeded the Citimukulus. The Government supported the latter claimant, but there seems to have been very little to choose between the

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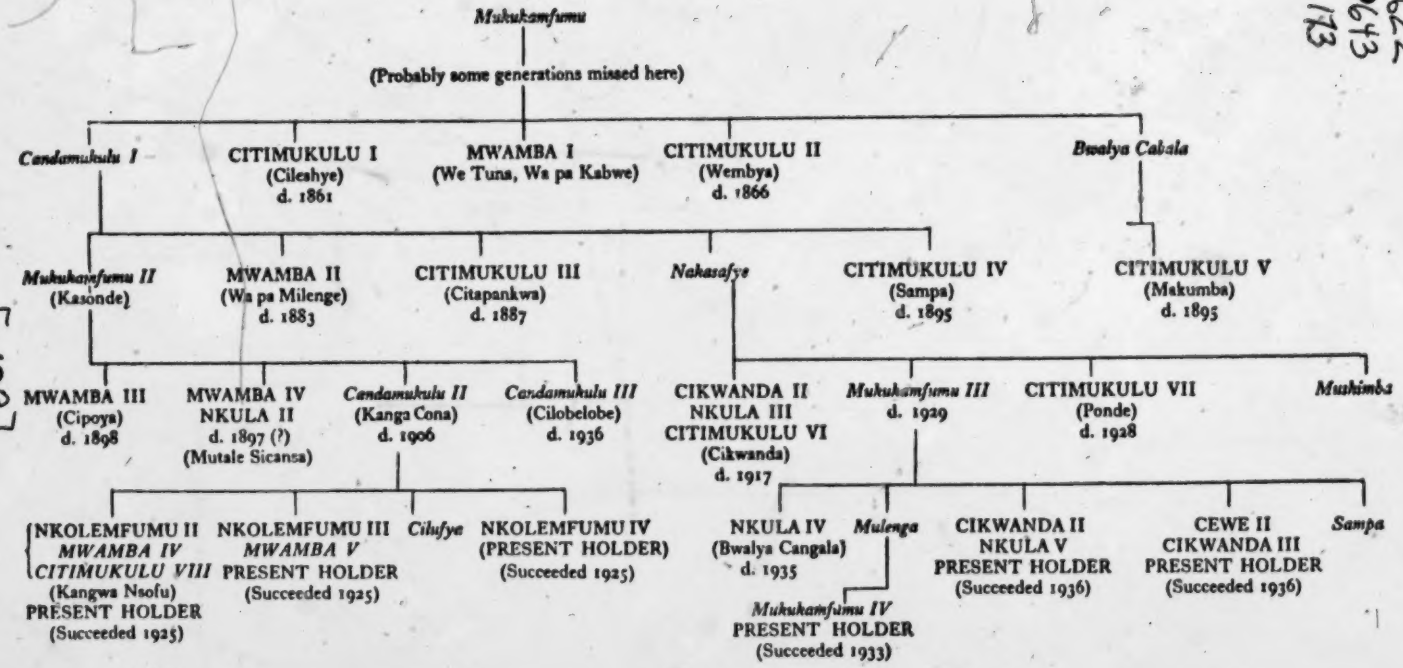


*Chart showing succession in central branch of the royal family* (taken from a table made by E. B. H. Goodall and kept at the Government Office, Kasama)

Men shown thus: CITIMUKULU Women shown thus: *Candamukulu*

NOTE—(1) Two or more titles means the successive holding of two or more chieftaincies. (2) Citumukulu I designates the first Paramount in *this particular lineage group*.

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legal rights of the two rivals, and the rather complex machinery of tribal deliberation on such matters (cf. p. 109) was not called into motion.

The chart also shows clearly the way in which certain chieftainships have also tended to become fixed in different family lines of this main branch of the *Bena yandu* even during the last four generations, i.e. the Mwambaship, the Nkolemfumuship, the Mpeposhiip in the line of the chieftainess Mukukamfumu, and the Nkulaship, the Cikwandaship, and the Ceweship in the line of Nakasafye. The separation between these two branches will probably become wider and wider with time. In the case of the outlying sub-chieftainships, this separation off of local family lines of the royal clan has proceeded even further. To conclude, there are definite rules of succession according to Bemba kinship but the type of matrilineal succession usually provides two or three possible heirs, and in the case of the bigger chieftainships there are a number of different factors, such as the paramount's control over the more important *ifyalo*, the traditional order of succession to different offices, local feeling in the case of sub-chieftainships, and last, but not by any means a negligible point, the personal qualities of the candidates themselves.

### *IV. Functions and Prerogatives of Leadership*

The functions of the territorial heads, i.e. chiefs and headmen, seem to be derived from two sources—the position of the leader as head of a kinship group and his role as the representative of a line of dead ancestors in a particular district. In the case of a headman, these two aspects are indistinguishable, while the latter predominates where a chief is concerned.

(*a*) *The Headman.* Bemba headmen are described as looking after, keeping, or actually 'herding the people' (*ukuteka bantu*). As senior kinsman of most of the villagers, a headman is responsible for the discipline of the children and young people; he hears cases informally and directs some economic activities. There are few activities carried out by the whole community in common except fishing and hunting, but besides organizing these latter pursuits a good headman initiates each new agricultural process and encourages and criticizes the younger men and women. Land is not often a matter of dispute in this area. The headman does not allot individual plots, but listens to cases should any arise. He is said to

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the old days are an example. The big tribal councils of most of the African peoples described as being attended by 'every one' and in reality very large meetings, must also act as occasions when the loyalty of the tribe is fostered. Among the Bemba much of the tribal ritual is secret, as has been shown, and the advisory council is composed of what might be called an aristocratic caste. If the *bakabilo* meet in sitting on the open ground in the capital, as I have seen happen, they use archaic language on purpose, so that the common people cannot understand. It is no occasion for high-flown oratory or any of the demagogue's arts. On the other hand, the Bemba chiefs were formerly considered very nearly divine, and the belief in their supernatural powers is still strong enough to integrate the tribe. The sacredness of the royal ceremonial largely depends on its secrecy and the fact that only persons of the right descent can take their part in the ritual. The ordinary people do not attend the ceremonies except in the case of some inhabitants of the capital, but they value their secret nature and speak contemptuously of the Bisa and neighbouring tribes with less complex rites. The number of the *bakabilo*, each scattered through the chief's *icalo* and each with his own ritual function, sometimes secret from his own fellows, also adds to the strength of the whole ceremonial system. Each is insistent that *his* part is absolutely essential to the welfare of the tribe, and his own village is convinced to that effect, too. Another integrating factor is the belief in royal descent and presence in the society of such a large number of men and women who claim chiefly rank. These are dispersed all over the country, generally in charge of villages, and they naturally support the chiefs from whom they derive their power.

As regards the activities of the different *ifyalo*, it has been seen that these are self-contained units and there is no regular provision for regular meetings of *icalo* heads. They are linked by the overlordship of the paramount, who acts as judge of their court of appeal, and the different tiny states are bound together because of the close relationship between their different chiefs. Messengers constantly go from one court to another to inquire after family matters, the children of one chief are sent to be brought up at the capital of another, the chiefs themselves take office first in one *icalo* and then another, and even the Citimukulu takes no important step, ritual or political, without consulting his 'brothers', the big territorial heads.

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622 643 782 But here again ritual is one of the big integrating forces. The Citimukulu can initiate a series of sacrifices (*ulupepo lukalamba*), which start at his relic houses and spread to all the shrines throughout the land. The *bakabilo* are sent from Lubemba to bury any of the bigger territorial chiefs who die in their distant *ifyalo* and to install the new heir. The paramount prays for rain on the rare occasions when it is required, on behalf of the whole tribe. Thus for ritual purposes, in spite of the quarrels and jealousies between different lines of the royal family, the whole Bemba country can be said to act as a whole and to be conscious of its unity. If the paramount chief were to turn Christian before the political institutions of this tribe have been considerably adapted, tribal cohesion would, I think, be very much weakened, whether temporarily or permanently.

### *VII. Post-European Changes*

177 642 643 The advent of British rule in Northern Rhodesia changed at once the position of the Bemba chief and his political machinery, and it continues to do so in an increasing variety of ways. Some of these changes are due to the actual introduction of new authorities into the area—whether Government officials, missionaries, or other Europeans—who have either replaced the old Bemba officials, divided the spheres of authority with them, or introduced entirely new conceptions of the functions of government itself. Others seem to be mainly the result of changed economic conditions, particularly the introduction of money, the institution of wage labour, and the provision of opportunities for money-making in industrial undertakings outside the territory. Such factors, over which the Administration has often little direct control, have inevitably affected the position of the Bemba chief. They have altered the people's conception of authority, destroyed the whole basis of labour on which the powers of the chief depended, and the old correlation between political authority, economic privilege, and military strength.

177 The total effects of white domination on the Bemba political organization have not yet proceeded to their full length, but it will be well to indicate some of the changes produced by the introduction of a new machinery of government, e.g. the alteration in the balance of the old tribal system, and the resultant weakening of the personal relationship between subject and chief upon which